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THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPELS

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THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPELS

By

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ALMAE MATRI
OCCIDENTALI

Hospes qui olim ego
Nunc gratiam reddo.
Si ita mitis alii
Amaberis, esto
Et magna, sempiterna,
Celebrata in saeclo.

CONTENTS

PREFACE 9

I. THE BACKGROUND OF HISTORY 15

§ 1. The Persian and Greek Periods . 15
2. The Maccabaean Kings . . . 28
3. Herod 36
4. The First Century A. D. . . 47

II. THE ECONOMIC DATA . . . 54

§ 1. The Land and its Products . . 55
2. Labour 64
3. Trade 72
4. Finance 76
5. Population 81
6. Government and Taxation . . 87
7. Religious Dues 92
8. Summary 104

III. THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPELS 111

APPENDIX

A. The Letter of Aristeas, §§ 105–20 . 145
B. The Tariff Decree of Palmyra . 148

PREFACE

The importance of familiarity with economic conditions for the understanding of social history is now generally recognized. And since religion is one of the most important factors in that history the significance of economic conditions for religious development is readily apparent. Especially is this true of the ancient Jewish religion, whose gradually developed customs, rites, and beliefs were subtly interwoven with the entire fabric of social life in Palestine from the tenth century before Christ to the third and fourth centuries of our era. It is the purpose of this volume to present a general sketch of the economic development of Palestinian Judaism during the period immediately preceding the rise of Christianity, and to study its bearing upon one of the outstanding expressions of Jewish religion, the Messianic hope.

The thesis to which the study leads and which it is in turn designed to support is that pre-Christian Jewish Messianism was nurtured and sustained by the disappointed hopes of a buoyantly optimistic nation. The patriots of Judaism saw but one outlook of promise for the future, national autonomy following liberation from the hated yoke of foreign sovereignty. The peasants, the agricultural labourers of Palestine,

the overcrowded industrial populace of the Jewish cities, the commercial classes overburdened by oppressive taxation, eagerly shared this dream. They looked forward to a future in which the soil should once more be renewed in fertility, a new and divinely ordered city supplant the old, uncomfortably overcrowded Jerusalem, and a righteous king of their own accept the free offerings of his happy people. Out of this popular, Utopian expectation grew the vast if unsubstantial vision of a purely celestial, wholly divine, transcendent Kingdom of God, with a heavenly Messiah at its head—'the Son of Man who hath righteousness', of the Book of Enoch—who should bring to an end the present order, hold the Last Judgement of men and nations, and inaugurate 'the age to come'.

I have already published a study of the economic significance of Jewish Messianism, examining the evidence for economic factors determining the form of the hope reflected in Jewish apocalyptic literature of the period from 200 B. C. to A. D. 100, and concluding that its economic significance is indisputable.[1] The principle of interpretation thus substantiated is

[1] See 'The Economic Significance of Messianism' in the *Anglican Theological Review*, vi. 3 and vii. 3 (1923–4). Since the above was written, Dr. Joseph Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth* has appeared. It is gratifying to note that he not only supports, with far greater learning, the view of economic conditions here presented, but also agrees with the interpretation of Messianism which I have advanced.

taken for granted in the present work, which sketches on a larger scale, though briefly, the total process of economic development between the Persian period and the Fall of Jerusalem. As a result of the survey, it appears that the conditions scantily reflected in the New Testament Gospels (i. e. the Synoptics : Matthew, Mark, Luke) are precisely those which the earlier and contemporary Jewish literature reflects ; accordingly, the Synoptic Gospels may be added to our sources for the economic history of late Judaism. The same is true of the Epistle of James, and of sections of the Fourth Gospel and the Book of Acts. It appears, moreover, that the political turmoil of the two generations preceding the fall of the capital was not wholly due to administrative incompetence on the part of Rome, nor to an irrational fanaticism on the part of the subject Jews of Palestine, but to an increasing tension produced by economic conditions. This tension no peaceful device known to ancient statesmanship could either remedy or remove. Over-population, especially in the cities ; a declining productivity of the soil—this in itself a fateful factor beyond human ingenuity to circumvent, climatic and indeed geologic in its origin ; and a twofold taxation, civil and religious, beyond the powers of utmost thrift to sustain : such were the outstanding features of the political-economic situation in the Palestine of Jesus' time. And it was a condition destined to grow worse rather than

better, until beyond human power to control. Well did the Prophet from Galilee foresee the ultimate outcome—Jerusalem in ruins, its Temple destroyed, and the judgement woes outpoured not upon the surrounding heathen nations but upon the beloved city and the Holy Land. Failing a total renovation of society through 'repentance' and the adoption of new principles of living, as He foresaw, conditions prevalent in the first third of the century could only continue to grow worse until utter disaster overtook the nation. The truth of this prophecy was made tragically clear by the final issue.

If the interpretation of the data advanced in this book is correct, the current question, 'Was Jesus a social revolutionist?' answers itself. He was a revolutionist only in the sense that the ethical principles He advanced were revolutionary in their ultimate effects upon society. For the immediate political future, or, indeed, for the present, He had little concern. The twofold taxation, civil and religious, roused in Him no furious patriotic resentment. 'Render to Caesar whatever is his; to God what belongs to Him.' The real revolution belongs to God. In His good time—'the day and the hour knoweth no man,' for 'the Kingdom cometh not with observation'—God will take His great power and reign, and the kingdom of this world will become wholly His. The 'social gospel' which Jesus preached, like its 'individual' ethics, is only the

preparation for that Kingdom, preparation by which individuals may fit themselves for acceptance or entrance (or 'salvation') when it comes. The immediate fruits of the transformed lives of 'children of the Kingdom' are of course 'social' in the fullest degree. Yet it is no revision of the processes of corporate life, of industry, of production or trade or political control that Jesus counsels; no ameliorative alteration of the structure or machinery of the social order or its existing institutions can conceivably achieve the results at which Jesus aimed. Nothing short of a complete revision of human standards (which is the primary sense of repentance, *metanoia*), and the whole-hearted adoption of the new principles of living which He expounded and exemplified, can effect this end. For this alone will make possible the realization of the divine plan, and in a sense release the full 'powers of the age to come'. As a Rabbi not far removed in time from Jesus' day nor in spirit from His message declared, 'Messiah shall come when all Israel repents and obeys perfectly the will of God from one Sabbath to the next'. In the prayer which our Lord's disciples were to use are found the words, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven'. Complete response to the perfect will of God is the essence of the divine reign or Kingdom, and therefore the most essential prerequisite to its coming.

Thus the study of the economic background of Jesus' teaching throws into clearer relief the principles which He set forth, and sheds light upon more than one problem in the history of the beginnings of Christianity.

The substance of this volume was submitted to the Faculty of the Western Theological Seminary, Chicago, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of D.D. in course. It remains a pleasant duty to thank those who have read the manuscript, and by whose criticisms it has been improved: Professor Burton Scott Easton, of the General Theological Seminary, New York City; Professor Samuel A. B. Mercer, of Trinity College, Toronto, Canada; Dr. George Foot Moore, of Harvard University; Professor Shirley Jackson Case, of the University of Chicago. I am also greatly indebted to the Rev. George A. Cooke, D.D., for kind permission to reprint his translation of the Tariff Decree of Palmyra; and my obligations to the Rev. Sir George Adam Smith far exceed those indicated in the foot-notes—his works have been for many years a stimulus and inspiration.

Bexley Hall, Kenyon College,
Gambier, Ohio.
1 *July* 1925.

I

THE BACKGROUND OF HISTORY

It is the aim of this chapter to sketch briefly the course of events in ancient Palestine during the period between the Return from Exile and the end of the first Christian century. The full story of the period has been told scores of times in standard treatises, books, and articles, easily accessible to readers of any modern language. My purpose is only to single out the facts in that historical development which are of economic significance, a significance easily overlooked by the casual reader and even by the student unless particular attention has been directed to them. These facts of economic significance may be expected to throw some light upon a re-reading of the political history; and they are of course indispensable for an intelligent discussion of the data which confront us in the early New Testament period—the time of Jesus, the first third of the first century A. D.

§ 1. *The Persian and Greek Periods*

The restored community of Judah in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra the Scribe offered a sad contrast to the former glories of the nation. But it was a new

beginning, however small, and its members were not without hope of still greater things to come. The spirit which led the exiles to return and attempt the reconstruction of their national life, the restoration of their national sanctuary and worship, has often been described as the quintessence of patriotism, a keen sense of nationality, a jealous devotion to the fathers' God, Yahweh the God of Israel. There is no doubt that such motives of patriotism and piety formed strong elements in the situation; and they are readily understood by men of all races and at all times. But the records of the period which have come down to us, and those of the years succeeding, point to a motive still more intense and powerful. The Return from Exile was in some sense a movement of Jewish Messianism.

This movement was the immediate result of the work of the great pre-exilic prophets. Foreseeing an appalling political and military disaster which was to overtake the nation, they prepared to meet its shock with the doctrine of a 'remnant' which should survive. This remnant was to return after a long period of years: the number 'seventy' expressed the indeterminateness and length of the time of exile. Isaiah had made this teaching a cardinal part of his message. Jeremiah reinforced and deepened it. Ezekiel laid definite plans for its realization in a restored and holy nation under the guidance of true priests and a Davidic king.

Deutero-Isaiah heralded its glorious fulfilment in his sublimest paeans and rhapsodies.

Thus when the actual return at last became possible, with the rise of Cyrus the Persian, there was in existence among the Jewish exiles in Babylonia a widespread group who were prepared to go forth at any cost of sacrifice to themselves, inspired by the hope of a divine Utopia, and erect once more the walls of Jerusalem and its Temple. This noble expectation which filled the hearts of the Jewish 'remnant' explains the severe emphasis which was later placed upon racial purity (through the exclusion of foreign wives), and the refusal of political and economic co-operation or social intercourse with the heathen peoples who had been settled in the land. It accounts for the breach between Jews and Samaritans which persists to the present day. It explains the deeply felt repugnance of pure-blooded Jews for the 'people of the land'. It explains the later aristocratic and conservative orthodoxy of the upper religious caste of Judaism. Above all, it accounts for the tremendous emphasis which Judaism, from that time onwards, laid upon the Torah. For it was 'the determination . . . of its reconstructors to found a theocratic state in which a completed Torah was to regulate all matters of social life. . . . The Return was an attempt to institutionalize prophetic Messianism.' [1]

[1] Mathews, *Messianic Hope in the New Testament*, p. 7. So

So dominant a factor in the existence of the community naturally affected its economic life in every detail. Their poverty was the poverty of pioneers, wresting from a ravaged and desolate land their scanty subsistence; their non-intercourse with foreigners forced them into a state of complete economic self-dependence;[1] while their idealism and confident hope in Yahweh's speedy vindication of His loyal servants made it possible to bear and endure the privations and sufferings of their self-imposed lot. Nowhere is this condition better to be seen, in both its material and psychological aspects, than in the short collection of prophecies which has come down to us under the name of the prophet Haggai (which is accurately dated in 520 B.C., i.e. even before the time of Nehemiah and Ezra).

Although the returned exiles had now been settled for some time in the land, the Temple still lay in ruins. While the colonists 'dwell in ceiled houses', Yahweh's 'house lieth waste'. Therefore the calamities that have come upon the struggling little community, so sore a trial of their faith!

'It is on your account that the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth its fruit! And I called for a drought upon

also Bevan, *Jerusalem under the High Priests*, p. 8: the restored Jewish community 'looks less like a state and more like a church'.

[1] Save for contributions from fellow Jews elsewhere, e.g. in Babylonia and Egypt.

the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon the labour of the hands.' (Hag. i. 10–11.)

The immediate effect of Haggai's message was a renewal of the work upon the Temple. His next recorded sermon, a month later, is a heartening message of comfort and encouragement.

'Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith Yahweh, and work; for I am with you, saith Yahweh of hosts.' (*Ib.*, ii. 4.)

Soon the proofs of Yahweh's presence will be seen:

'I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. . . . And the desirable things of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with my glory, saith Yahweh of hosts. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith Yahweh of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former . . . and in this place will I give peace, saith Yahweh of hosts.' (*Ib.*, ii. 6–9.)

We are equally struck in these brief sermons with the crushing poverty, the confident faith in God and expectation of future magnificence by His act, and the simple agricultural economy of Haggai's hearers.

The extent of territory of the post-exilic community in Judah has been variously estimated. The Persian province of that name probably included only the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, i. e. the territory west of the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan, forming a rough oval about twenty miles wide by thirty long, enclosed within a line which swept in

Jericho, Geba, Mizpah, Kiriath-jearim, on the north; Zanoah, Netophah, on the west; Keilah and Beth-zur on the south (including the wilderness of Judah)—at most six hundred square miles, and much of that rocky and waste.[1]

Semi-independent religious communities like that of Judah were not unknown in the Near East during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. There was the shrine of Atargatis at Bambyce in Syria, in the midst of a fertile valley. Throughout Asia Minor were to be found similar communities, such as the sacred city of Ma at Comana in Cappadocia,[2] with its swarming mart, its wide acres, and its six thousand temple slaves; the temple of Zeus at Venasa, with three thousand temple slaves, and land which yielded its high priest an annual income of fifteen talents; the temple of Zeus Asbameus near Tyana, of Apollo in Cataonia, Mater Zizimene near Iconium, Artemis Perasia in Castabala, Mater Magna at Pessinus. There is little doubt that at least from the Persian and Greek point of view the religious community (or 'nation') of the Jews in Palestine was looked upon as one more of these sacred communities, centred in a temple, and supported by its surrounding land—which belonged, theoretically, to the god, i. e. to Yahweh. The 'clerical form of local

[1] So Kent, *History of the Jewish People*, p. 158; Meyer, *Entstehung des Judentums*, p. 105 ff.; on the contrary, Smith, *Atlas*, map 37.

[2] Strabo, xii. 2–3.

organization' was carefully fostered by the Persians. Details of fiscal, judicial, and religious administration were left to the high priests, who were responsible for law and order within their own territory, and for the regular payment of the tribute exacted by the Empire (i. e. by the 'Great King', who personified its exalted power) through the provincial satrap or governor. This state of things, common under the Persians, was inherited by the Seleucids and Ptolemies, and continued to characterize the internal administration of their empires down to Roman times. It was the prevailing political tradition of the whole Levant. Even the Romans disturbed the system as little as possible, their aim being primarily commercial rather than military. According to Ferguson, 'The Seleucids must have found the body of their empire thickly studded with religious communities, each subject to its own code of divine law, each dominated by a masterful and long-petted theocracy. Under this baleful rule the whole country had settled down during the Persian time in progressive political and economic stagnation.'[1]

Alexander's conquest marked the dawn of a new era throughout all western Asia. History has for-

[1] W. S. Ferguson, *Greek Imperialism*, Boston, 1913, p. 198 f. See the whole section on 'Policy and Problems of the Seleucids'. On Persian degeneracy, even as early as the beginning of the fourth century, Xenophon has some remarks in his *Cyropaedia*.

given, as the cities of Egypt and Syria at once forgave, the one dark blot on his character in the eyes of his Greek fellow soldiers—the *proskynesis* which he accepted as a god from his new subjects, and demanded, with strict logic if not with common sense, from the Macedonian generals on his staff. Men knew well enough that the account of his descent from Zeus-Ammon was only a fiction. But the tide of traffic which followed in his train, the immense expansion of commerce, the growth of cities, the creation of markets for new and unfamiliar wares and of still greater markets for the old well-known commodities, the importation of novel articles of luxury, the gradual spread of the Greek language as the lingua franca—and along with the Greek language Greek ideas, customs, dress, political concepts and forms of organization, religious beliefs, standards of living —all this wrought such a transformation in the lives and outlook of men that Alexander's claim to deity, or at least to divine descent, seemed either justified or excusable to the majority. Could a god do more ? Alexander was bringing world-wide prosperity, where hitherto their local gods had done little more than bless particular cities, and free intercourse between men, where hitherto had been only cramped isolation and dull, toilsome poverty.

If we recall the conditions described by Xenophon, who crossed southern Asia Minor, northern Syria, and then followed the Euphrates south to Cunaxa

in 401 (Book I of the *Anabasis*); if we recall the succession of 'villages' through which the soldiers of Cyrus passed, stopping long enough to buy—or plunder—wheat, millet, panik, 'wine made from the juice of the palm', and, when they reached the northern part of Babylonia, dates and palm-cabbage;[1] if we remember that for leagues across southern Mesopotamia they found a barren and dry land insufficient to support even their small army; and then contrast with this the conditions described by writers after the time of Alexander,[2] especially Strabo,[3] and recall the growth of cities, their size and magnificence, and the vast system of trade and exchange which gradually rose until it reached its culminating point in Roman times, we shall be in a better position to understand the worship ungrudgingly paid (albeit upon demand) to Alexander and his successors by their grateful subjects, even by whole cities.[4]

Alexander's conquest, like that of the Romans two and three centuries later, was more than the result

[1] *Anabasis*, ii. 3, 14–16; these made the Greek soldiers sick.

[2] And even earlier, e. g. Herodotus. There is much to be said for Ferguson's theory of economic decadence under the Persians.

[3] e. g. xvi. 1. 9–11, 2. 22–5.

[4] Especially by cities. The economic fruits of the Greek conquest were more speedily obvious on the large scale. On the prosperity following Alexander, see W. W. Tarn, 'The Social Question in the Third Century', in *The Hellenistic Age*, Cambridge, 1923, esp. pp. 108–15.

of an outburst of personal ambition—it was the inevitable result of overwhelming economic necessity. 'The soldier is a natural force, like the flood or the whirlwind. He breaks down obstructions otherwise insuperable. Alexander's battles were but an incident in a process which only ended with Actium. His function was to centralize; and that he understood his destiny is clear from his answer to the embassy sent him by Darius during the siege of Tyre: "As it would be impossible for order to reign in the world with two suns, so it is impossible for the earth to be at peace with two masters."'[1]

Unification, centralization, imperialism, a common language, ubiquitous state officialdom, free intercourse, trade—these were the result. After Alexander, the Near East became more and more a unit, connecting Egypt, on the south, with Greece, Macedon, and Asia Minor on the north and west. It was an Eastern Mediterranean world in itself, a growing economic unity, a commercial empire knit together by three main trunk lines of transportation and exchange: the system of roads across Asia Minor, east and west, connecting Ionia, Macedon, and Greece with the East; the system of rivers, canals, and highways stretching south and east to Mesopotamia, Babylon, and the Farther East; and the ancient route down along the Mediterranean

[1] Brooks Adams, *The New Empire*, New York, 1902, p. 38. See the whole chapter.

coast through Syria and Palestine to Egypt, a route extremely narrowed by three important geographical factors—the sea, the mountains, and the near-by desert. Antioch, lying at the heart of this radiating system like an ancient Chicago or London, was inevitably destined to grow and prosper. Alexander himself may well have foreseen its future; Alexandreia on the Bay of Issus (modern Iskenderun on Alexandretta Bay) remained the monument to his conviction.

It was impossible for Palestine to remain untouched by this swelling tide of commercial expansion. The southern route, the great main artery which led to Egypt, lay, so to speak, across the shoulders and down one side of the Holy Land. Only the most extreme form of national exclusiveness, only the strongest wall of non-intercourse, only the most obdurate tenacity in clinging to the religious traditions of the earlier time could prevent the Jews from sharing fully in the common economic life and civilization of the Hellenistic period. That they did share in it to a large degree scarcely needs proof. One is reminded at once of the great expansion of Judaism under the Ptolemies; of the favour in which the Jews were esteemed at Alexandria; of the royal subsidy of the Septuagint translation;[1] and, within Palestine itself, of the

[1] The story, at least, is significant, though the fact is not beyond dispute.

state of affairs reflected in the Wisdom of Sirach,[1] the Letter of Aristeas,[2] 1 Maccabees,[3] and Josephus' brief account (*Antiquities*, xii) of the period between Alexander and Judas the Maccabee.

Josephus describes Palestine under Antiochus (III) the Great as 'sorely harassed'; so that the Jews and the inhabitants of Coele-Syria were 'equally sufferers, both when he was beaten and when he beat the others; so that they were very like to a ship in a storm, which is tossed by the waves on both sides:

[1] See Schechter's essay, 'Social Life among the Jews in the Age of Jesus the Son of Sirach', in *Studies in Judaism, Second Series*, Phila., 1908.

[2] Especially §§ 83–120; see the appendix to this volume, where a translation of §§ 105–20 is given. Note that the form of the city of Jerusalem is compared to a theatre (!); the tendency to flock to the city, leaving the farms to go untilled; the comparison with things geographical and administrative in Egypt; the polytechnic arts of the capital; the political and military significance of Palestine's mountains and the copper and iron mines of Arabia.

[3] 1 Macc., *passim*; but esp. i. 11–15, 'In those days came there forth out of Israel transgressors of the Law, and persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles that are round about us; for since we were parted from them many evils have befallen us [i. e. since the fall of the Persians?]. And the saying was good in their eyes. And certain of the people were forward herein and went to the king, and he gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the Gentiles. And they built a place of exercise in Jerusalem according to the laws [*νόμιμα*, customs] of the Gentiles; and they made themselves uncircumcized, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves [socially?] to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil.'

and just thus were they in the middle between Antiochus' prosperity and its change to adversity' (*Antiquities*, xii. 3. 3). Though this undoubtedly marks a contrast to the more peaceful times of the long Ptolemaic dominion, it is more or less applicable to the whole third century before Christ. There was continual warfare, with campaign after campaign crossing Palestine, between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, fighting for its annexation to their respective empires. Nevertheless, the stories which Josephus immediately afterwards tells of Joseph the tax-farmer and his son Hyrcanus,[1] and of Antiochus' plundering of the Temple, prove that Palestine was generally prosperous, the Jews populous, and the Jewish populated territory much greater in extent than in the far-off pioneer days following the Return from Exile.[2] Though Josephus seems to distinguish, with Polybius, between 'Jews', who dwelt near Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Batanaea, Samaria, Abila, Gadara (and Phoenicia, 4. 1), these are not much greater than the distinctions made all along, even until late in Roman times. Though Galilee is

[1] Note that although Joseph enjoyed a reputation for leniency with his own people, he acquired the taxing privileges by bidding twice as much as any other competitor, paying the enormous sum of 16,000 talents per annum. Nevertheless he became vastly wealthy during his tenure of twenty-two years.

[2] This is just the impression we receive from the Letter of Aristeas, written before or about 200 B. C. See the passage quoted in the Appendix.

not mentioned, we know from its history in Maccabaean times that it had even at this early date a partly Jewish population; it is very evident that there has been a gradual expansion of the Jewish territory proper since the days when Judah was a Persian province. And although Judah scarcely includes the sea-coast,[1] it embraces all of southern Palestine and wedges in so tightly that friction develops from time to time between the Jews and the neighbouring states—especially with Samaria, as Josephus says.

§ 2. *The Maccabaean Kings*

The fact of greatest economic significance in the Maccabaean period is, naturally, the revolution and the rise of the Maccabees themselves. The success of the uprising and the subsequent defence of the Holy Land against repeated campaigns under able generals and with ever larger and better equipped armies sent out from Antioch, has been explained in two ways: first, by the impregnable natural defences of the mountain region of central Palestine;[2] and, second, by the growing weakness of the Seleucid Empire, internally losing vigour, face to face with the oncoming power of Rome in the West, and

[1] Contrary to Aristeas, § 115. Was the author of the Letter referring to Ptolemaic times? If so, his statement may have been quite correct.

[2] See the Letter of Aristeas, § 118, referred to above.

harassed at the rear by the Parthians and other restive peoples then entering one of the recurrent eras of mid-Asiatic expansion. But negative considerations alone do not account for the phenomenal victory of a small and not naturally warlike people over the determined and well-prepared efforts of a first-class power of the second century before Christ, fighting desperately to maintain itself on three fronts. If we need a modern parallel to make the situation clear, it was as if Poland or Belgium had fought Germany single-handed to a standstill; or as if Serbia had held Austria at bay until the tide of world-political events swept her power away. The Maccabaean War was unique, and its outcome proves not only the undying courage of the revolutionists; it proves also the economic independence and resourcefulness of Palestine at the time the sword was drawn. At no period, so far as we are able to tell, since the days preceding the Assyrian advance, six hundred years before, had the Jews been in such a political and economic condition as to make victory, if not certain, at least a real possibility. Not that Mattathias or his sons sat down to 'count the cost' before lighting the fires of revolt. But their success proves the state of the country to whose defence they and their followers sprang.

The conditions revealed or presupposed by the events of the Maccabaean struggle mark the end of what certainly must have been a long, slow, gradual

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development from the days of Nehemiah. The population had increased, partly by the influx of new families from the Dispersion, partly by natural numerical expansion. The Jewish territory was fully populated and dominated by Jews, and outside Judah (as in Galilee and the region east of the Jordan) there were scattered colonies. And although the government was modelled, at least outwardly and formally, upon the prevailing Hellenistic type common in the Levant—with the regular *gerusia* of the Greek and Grecized cities, like the Hellenistic communes afterwards called the Decapolis—still the local administration (including the *gerusia*) was wholly in the hands of Jews.[1] The contrast between this condition and that of Jerusalem and its surrounding territory in the days of Haggai or of Ezra is the measure of the development which took place in the three hundred and fifty years that had intervened.

The immediate provocation of the revolt was the effort of Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes to Hellenize Jerusalem and Judaea. The political reason for this renewed and more zealous effort on his part to carry out what had been all along his general policy is not altogether obvious. There was no doubt some connexion between the repulse which he met in 168 at the hands of Popilius Laenas and the fury of

[1] Cf. Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, i (4th ed.), pp. 181–6.

his final onslaught upon the Jewish capital. The Roman general met him as he was entering Egypt on a campaign of conquest, and in the name of the Senate ordered him to desist. Antiochus replied that he would consider the request (perhaps after he had conquered Egypt !). Popilius took a staff, drew a circle about the hesitating monarch, and ordered, 'Consider right here!'—*ἐνταῦθα βουλεύου*.[1]

Completely frustrated in his plans, and without further object of conquest in Egypt, Antiochus now bent his energies all the more zealously upon Palestine. He sent a tax commissioner, Apollonius, to Jerusalem with orders to Hellenize the city completely and at once. All who refused to adopt Greek customs were to be rooted out, men to be put to death, women and children sold as slaves. In their places were to be settled foreigners. The 'citadel', David's ancient fortress, was occupied by a Syrian garrison—which remained there to the very end of the revolt, so strong was its fortification.

But what meaning had this undertaking ? There is little doubt that Antiochus' failure in Egypt explains it—although not as the mad revenge of a disappointed king (historians, ancient and modern, commonly psychologize !). Rather, it was the only reasonable measure to adopt, from Antiochus' point of view. *Palestine was now the southern frontier of the Empire.* Both in order to maintain the unity of the

[1] Polybius, xxix. 11 (27) ; cf. Schürer, i, p. 197.

kingdom of Antioch, and to defend it with some bulwark against the south and south-west—to guard the highways which led up into the southern passes of the Syrian mountains—there was nothing to do but fortify, unify, and Hellenize the southern frontier.[1]

How gravely miscalculated was his manner of procedure, a cruel and abominable example of ancient *moralfreie Realpolitik*, is to be seen from the outcome. Roused to the final pitch of heroic desperation, the Jews gathered about Mattathias and his sons, and revolted. At first it was a sturdy group of 'embattled farmers' who fled with their wives and families to the wilderness, and refused to make war on the Sabbath. But by the end of the war the Maccabees had a trained and effective army at their command; and the passes were kept open, particularly the one which led down to the sea, and to the highway to Egypt, via Upper and Lower Beth-horon. Gilead and Galilee had been at first relieved, and the Jewish population in these outlying districts brought on a long march, bag and baggage, with children, women, and cattle, back to Judaea. The southern defences, Hebron and Beth-zur, were held as long as possible—perhaps on account of the advantage of communication with Egypt and the Arabs as well as in order to check the encircling movements of the Syrian general Lysias. Even the forced annexation of the Edomites (or Idumaeans)

[1] Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, xii. 5. 2–3; *House of Seleucus*, ii. 172 f.

later on under John Hyrcanus, and their political conversion to the Jewish faith, otherwise an almost inexplicable movement,[1] may have a military-economic explanation—the same 'necessity' which led Germany to seize and overrun Luxemburg and Belgium and tempted her to take the Netherlands in 1914. These southern tribes were excellent warriors, and their land was then by no means the barren wilderness or sandy desert that it is to-day.

By the middle of the century the astute brother of Judas, Jonathan, had come to be recognized as *Strategos*, in alliance with the Syrian throne—or at least with one of its temporarily successful pretenders. Ekron was added to his territory after a war with the governor of Coele-Syria; somewhat later were added three 'districts' of Samaria, and the whole was made tax free. The Syrian power was now tottering towards extinction, and its rival representatives were attempting to outbid each other for the allegiance of the Jewish leaders. Jonathan's brother and successor, Simon, was appointed military commander of the whole of Palestine, from Tyre to the border of Egypt. With the help of Syrian as well as Jewish forces, the brothers set about to subdue all Palestine. Ambassadors were sent to the two western powers, Rome and Sparta, in the name of the high priest and people of the Jews. The port of Joppa, already occupied by a Jewish garrison, was

[1] Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiii. 9. 1; xv. 7. 9.

cleared of its heathen inhabitants and populated by Jews. Finally, in 141 B.C., the new era began: the yoke of the heathen was taken away from Israel and Simon was declared high priest and general and ruler of the Jews for ever—until there should arise a faithful prophet to determine the succession.[1] To mark the new-won independence, a fresh Jewish coinage was struck off, and commercial documents were dated from the new era in place of the old Seleucid reckoning.

But in 135 B.C. Jewish expansion was suddenly checked by Antiochus Sidetes, who drove the garrisons from Joppa and Gazara, which were henceforth compelled to pay tribute, disarmed the Jewish forces, and dismantled Jerusalem as a fortress. Six years later, however, Antiochus died, and John Hyrcanus, Simon's son, conquered the Samaritans and destroyed their temple—in order, perhaps, to compel them to worship at Jerusalem, for the sake of national and religious unity.[2] As we have already noted, he subdued the Edomites and forced them to become Jews. His son and successor, Aristobulus, pressing farther north, forced the Ituraeans into submission—thus making Galilee from this time on a dominantly Jewish district.

Later efforts at expansion proved futile.

[1] 1 Macc. xiii. 41; xiv. 41. Cf. J. A. A. Hart, in *Enc. Brit.*, xx. 620.

[2] This of course did not take place; but the conjectured motive seems consonant with Hyrcanus' general policy.

Alexander Jannaeus had a standing army, attacked Egypt, the east Jordan territory, and finally Philistia. However, he was checked on the east by the Arabians under Aretas. Threatened from this time on by the rising power of Armenia on the north, which now held Syria, the later Maccabees made no further conquests. Religion and other internal interests occupied them from now until the Roman conquest. It was a period of political decline. Just what its economic fortunes were is difficult to determine. If we may judge at all from the conditions in the days of Herod, there was a general prosperity whose only limitation was the necessity of supporting the armies constantly in the field under the Maccabaean kings.[1] But after the coming of Pompey in 63 B.C., freed from the necessity of maintaining an army, and especially after Caesar's victory in Egypt (in 47), thanks to the favours shown by him to Hyrcanus, the now fully enlarged Jewish territory continued to develop religiously and socially, intensifying the national unity, and still further expanding that commercial activity which made possible the magnificence of the days of Herod.

[1] This 'prosperity', however, probably did not compare with that of the old patrician days of the Ptolemaic period—before Palestine began to bear the direct burden of continued warfare. Bevan takes a quite different view. Speaking of the time of Alexander Jannaeus, he says, 'Under the blast of the Jewish conquests, civilization in Palestine withered away. Where there had been prosperous cities were heaps of ruins. Fields went back

§ 3. *Herod*

The importance of Herod the Idumaean for Jewish history is almost fully explained when he is described as a representative of the force which, in the first century before Christ, was sweeping all before it in the Mediterranean world—the commercial-imperial power of Rome. His father, Antipater, had been appointed 'governor' (ἐπιμελητής) of the Jews by the Roman legate in Syria.[1] Antipater's duties had been not much more than the collection of taxes, the religious leadership of the nation remaining in the hands of Hyrcanus as high priest, and the civil administration (courts, police, &c.) probably remaining in the province of the local councils or 'elders'. A little later, after the victory of Caesar in 47 B.C., Antipater was called ἐπίτροπος (not quite the same thing as the office of procurator under the later Empire, though probably concerned with finance), and granted Roman citizenship and immunity from taxation. Antipater next appointed his two sons, Phasael and Herod, as military governors (στρατηγοί), the former to control southern Palestine and Jerusalem, the other Galilee. This was Herod's start in life, at the age of 25.

to brushwood and roaming bands of marauders had free course in the land. Such a state of things marked the zenith of the Hasmonaean power' (*Jerusalem under the High Priests*, p. 128).

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* xiv. 8. 1. As such he was a kind of Prime Minister, and 'power behind the throne'.

Like his father before him, Herod owed his position to his cleverness in playing the game of politics. While Antony lived he was Herod's security against Cleopatra; when Octavianus Caesar conquered Antony, Herod made his peace with the new *imperator*, and secured his throne. His whole history is a history of cleverly varied foreign policy, shrewd bribes, and artful diplomacy.

But there is a larger sense in which Herod's reign marks the penetration of Roman influence in Palestine. Herod's own ideas of government, of social life, of national prosperity and development were Roman. His efforts to adorn and beautify his capital and chief cities, his regard for shipping and trade in the provision of harbours, his concern for the amusement and recreation of the people—however ill-advised were many of his projects—show that he was under the spell of Italy and the Italian conception of political administration.

'He was governing for the Romans a part of the empire [and he knew it!], and he was bound to spread western customs and language and civilization among his subjects, and fit them for their position in the Roman world. Above all, the prime requirement was that he must maintain peace and order; the Romans knew well that no civilizing process could go on, so long as disorder and disturbance and insecurity remained in the country. Herod's duty was to keep the peace and naturalize the Graeco-Roman civilization in Palestine.'[1]

[1] Ramsay, *Was Christ born in Bethlehem*, 1898, p. 174.

A mere enumeration of Herod's external achievements is sufficient to indicate the extent of the resources at his command. Strato's Tower, on the Mediterranean coast, was entirely rebuilt and named Caesarea in honour of Octavian, furnished with a splendid harbour, fragments of whose mole exist to this day, and lavishly adorned with public buildings. It later became the seat of government, under the procurators. Samaria was rebuilt and renamed Sebastê. Both Caesarea and Sebastê contained temples built by him in honour of Caesar Augustus. Quadrennial games were instituted in the emperor's honour, and the necessary buildings were erected in Jerusalem—theatre, amphitheatre, and hippodrome. New fortresses took the place of the old Maccabaean strongholds. Their purpose was to check brigandage on the highways, and hold back the roving tribes from the eastern desert.[1] The cities of Chios and Rhodes in Asia Minor were the recipients of his benefactions, no doubt to the advantage of large numbers of Jews who inhabited the near-by provinces and the benefit of the Jewish people throughout the world. His crowning achievement, however, was the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem, which must have covered a multitude of

[1] In 23 B. C. Augustus added to his administration the districts of Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batanaea, and later on the districts of Ulatha and Panias—thus increasing the necessity for strong military defences.

his sins in the eyes of his Jewish subjects. His plans for the project were immense, and required nearly eighty-five years to complete, from 20 B. C. to A. D. 64. The Temple was in process of rebuilding during the lifetime of our Lord.[1]

All this architectural ambition required money, men, and materials for its realization. Where did Herod get them ? The essential question concerns the money. Men and materials were available enough if money was not lacking. There is little doubt that Herod's position as *rex socius*, a title which he earned by his cleverness in the days of the great struggle which went on through the years before the Battle of Actium, enabled him to collect

[1] It is noteworthy that Herod's architectural ambitions were not given full rein until about 20 B.C. The reasons are fairly clear. During the early years of his reign the whole Empire was shaking with the conflict of the Civil Wars, and Palestine was scarcely less affected than other allied states. Seizing the opportunity afforded by Roman internal discord, the Parthians threatened to overrun the eastern frontier, actually entering Palestine in the year 40 B. C., when Herod fled for his life to Alexandria. Bands of 'robbers' roved through the land. For some years, moreover, opposition to Herod was outspoken among the survivors of the Hasmonaean house, among the Pharisees, and the partisans of Cleopatra of Egypt. The consolidation of his kingdom was a slow process, requiring at least the first twelve years of his reign. It was really not until some time after the Battle of Actium that Herod was fully established on his throne and ready to go forward with his building operations. Only then began the period of relative prosperity which made possible the realization of his dreams of royal and national grandeur.

and expend his taxes as he saw fit. In return for exemption from tribute (gifts were not refused !), it was incumbent upon Herod to maintain the frontier defences and internal good government. The right of coinage was withheld, for obvious reasons—except for the small bronze currency used within Palestine.[1] But that he had every right to collect the taxes, by whatever method and in whatever amount he saw fit, is proved by his voluntary reduction of the taxes by one-third in the year 20 B.C. (the year in which work upon the Temple was begun).[2] In 25 B.C., he converted into coin his own household plate[3] in order to relieve the sufferers from famine by importing grain from Egypt. We may gather from these facts that Herod's exchequer was fairly balanced. He expended about what he received ; and the largest part of his expenditures was for internal improvements, in Palestine itself.

Except for the madness which cursed his later years, Herod was not a bad king. According to his own standards, he did what he thought best for his country. And no doubt Judaism owed him a real debt for its preservation through the stormy days of the Civil Wars. The very foundations of the

[1] See Kennedy, art. 'Money', in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

[2] See Josephus' explanation, *Ant.* xv. 10. 4.

[3] Silver ? If so, he must have sent it elsewhere to be minted, since he was not permitted to coin any metal but bronze.

world were out of course, and under a worse king Palestine might have fared far more unhappily.

Economically as well as politically, the significance of Herod's reign is to be seen in the expansion of the Roman power. It has been argued, and is now generally accepted as a fact, that England's empire has grown up through commercial expansion ; that in large measure the glory of empire has been thrust upon her ; that the trader and agent preceded, as a rule, the soldier and artilleryman.[1] It is one of the apologies for imperialism, as old as the earliest questionings of the right of conquest. Whatever its merits, a similar apology may be offered for the expansion of the Roman Empire. Conquest was (not always, but often) forced upon the Roman armies. After Carthage, the one serious rival that Rome ever faced, had been defeated, there came an easy, almost an inevitable extension of Roman sovereignty eastward, southward, and westward. One campaign, one victory, led to the necessity for another. Macedonia, Spain, the kingdom of Antiochus, Syria, Gaul, Thrace, Egypt, one after another fell before the arms of the Republic. The process was almost mechanical, like the toppling of

[1] Consider the very illuminating course of events in India, following the 'peaceful penetration' of the East India Company, its demand upon the Home Government for military defence of the Company's rights, and the subsequent occupation of India by the British Army.

a row of dominoes. For the world was an economic unity, and no more than in Alexander's day (now chiefly thanks to Alexander and his successors in the East) could it abide many masters.

One of the clearest proofs of the commercial (or 'capitalistic') imperialism which inspired the Roman march to world-conquest may be read in Cicero's famous oration, *For the Manilian Law*, delivered in the Senate in the year 66 B.C., towards the end of the last Mithridatic war.

'The revenues of other provinces, Gentlemen, are so meagre that we scarcely derive enough from them to meet the cost of their defence. But Asia is so rich and productive that the fertility of its soil, the variety of its fruits, the vastness of its pasture lands, the multitude of its commodities for export far exceed that of all other countries. For this reason, Gentlemen, if you have any regard for advantage in war or dignity in peace, this province must be defended by you not only from calamity but from the fear of it. For in other concerns damage is sustained when calamity arrives; but in the case of revenues, not only the arrival of evil but the bare dread of it brings disaster. For when the enemy's troops are not far away, even though no actual invasion has taken place, flocks are abandoned, farming is given up, sailings of merchants are cancelled. In consequence, neither from harbour dues, nor from tithes, nor from the tax on pasture lands, can any revenue be maintained; indeed, it often happens that the produce of an entire year is lost by one rumour of danger, by one alarm of war. . . . Moreover, the property of many Roman citizens is involved, citizens whom you, Gentlemen, as becomes your wisdom, must regard

with the most careful solicitude. The publicans, most honourable and accomplished men, have taken all their resources and wealth into that province ; and their property and fortunes ought, by themselves, to be an object of your especial care. In truth, if we have always considered the revenues the sinews of the Republic, certainly we shall be right if we call that order of men which collects them the prop and support of all the other orders. In the next place, clever and industrious men in all the other orders of the State are either themselves now trading in Asia—and you ought to show a regard for their interests in their absence—or else have large sums invested in that province. It will therefore become your humanity to protect a large number of those citizens from misfortune ; it will become your wisdom to perceive that the misfortune of many citizens cannot be considered otherwise than misfortune to the Republic. . . . For we know from experience that when many lost great fortunes in Asia, at the beginning of the war, all credit failed at Rome from delay in payments. It is impossible for many men to lose their property and fortunes in one city without drawing many others along with them into the same disaster. Therefore, preserve the Republic from this misfortune ! For believe me, as you yourselves well see, credit and the state of the money-market here at Rome, in the forum, are inseparably bound up with those fortunes invested in Asia. Those fortunes cannot fall without credit here being undermined by the same blow, and perishing along with them.'[1]

[1] *For the Manilian Law*, vi. (14)–vii. (19). This was Cicero's crowning argument for the more vigorous prosecution of the war. In this oration, if we are to judge from the motives to which Cicero so ably appealed or from his complete success, the imperial Republic appears almost in the guise of a vast commercial enterprise for the exploitation of the Near East : a trading corporation

For this reason, viz. to protect the tribute, to stabilize industry and agriculture and trade, to protect the financial interests in Rome itself, solely with a view to profit, the Roman Senate voted money for the support of armies, for the building of roads, for the suppression of piracy and brigandage, for the defence of far-flung frontiers, for the conquest of barbarous or semi-civilized peoples who threatened to invade the peaceful, prosperous, and populous provinces—*haec provincia . . . non modo a calamitate, sed etiam a metu calamitatis est defendenda!* For this purpose was the *pax romana* established, a postal system, banks, harbour-offices, sailing schedules, and the whole elaborate system of fiscal and military administration of the Mediterranean world. If Rome had not fallen before its own vices, if Caesarism had not developed, nor militarism run wild in the first pre-Christian century, one can scarcely imagine limits to the usefulness and greatness which might have been achieved by this vast and all-powerful commercial-political machine. For one thing, to mention one only, 'the civilized world found itself for the first time under a common system of law—administered with a western consistency; and even a maritime law began to exist'.[1]

prepared to use force where force is required, but only as a means to an end—greater trade and larger revenues.

[1] G. A. Smith, art. 'Trade and Commerce', *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 5188.

'Though the Romans, unlike the Phoenicians and the Greeks, did not increase the bounds of the known world, for they were not explorers, they reduced it to peace, and by this and their thorough administration of every department of life enormously increased its commerce and wealth. The life of the world is everywhere found in the most rapid circulation, against the throng and change of which voices from an older day appeal in vain. The mixture of nationalities on all the main lines is bewildering. Wealth and luxury increase by leaps and bounds.' [1]

Well could Virgil sing:

> Now comes the last age, foretold by the Sibyl of Cumae;
> Once more is renewed the procession of centuries: Justice
> Returns to the earth, and the Golden Era of Saturn.[2]

It is no wonder if Jews in Palestine, in Egypt, and even in Rome, could welcome with similar feeling the birth of the new era. For the Jews, the dawn of imperialism, the arrival of the Roman in the Holy Land, was doubly fatal. He brought prosperity, order, peace (in some degree; for Palestine was never wholly pacified); but he also brought a pervasive foreign religion, or backed up one already in existence with all the powerful supports of political and administrative usage; he brought an ever more hated and despised demand for tribute.[3]

[1] Smith, *ib.* [2] *Eclogue IV* (Pollio), 4–6.

[3] From the strict Jewish point of view both Herod's voluntary contributions and the later provincial taxation were looked upon as unlawful tribute; moreover, it is possible that the actual amount of money demanded increased as time went on and the Roman revel of prosperity became a drunken debauch of profligacy

But the full significance of this obnoxious presence was not felt until a decade or more after the death of Herod. While Herod lived peace and prosperity continued. Famine was the worst danger. And in years of famine the king was lenient. For it was still the Jewish theory that the people made the king.[1] And in spite of all the gruesome monstrosities of his private and domestic life, Herod feared the people enough to respect their needs, to cajole their growing petulance and discontent. He knew how to 'keep them happy'. He was as astute in his internal policy as he was adroit in his foreign relations. Nevertheless, a new régime was about to be inaugurated.[2]

and extravagance. Cf. *Encyc. Biblica*, 4910; T. Frank, *Roman Imperialism*, p. 320.

[1] Cf. Josephus, *passim*; e. g. *Ant.* xiii. 6. 4; see Smith, *Jerusalem*, i, pp. 435–56. Reduction of taxes: *Ant.* xv. 10. 4; xvi. 2. 5.

[2] Concerning the charges brought against Herod after his death, see the following section. They were answered by the clever historian and politician, Nicolaus of Damascus, one of the literati whom Herod (following his great patron's example) supported at his court. Said Nicolaus, 'These charges were never brought against him during his lifetime; and even lesser charges might have been sufficient to procure his removal; it is unfitting therefore to make accusations of this kind when he is dead' (Josephus, *Ant.* xvii. 11. 3). No rebuttal was made by the Jews—perhaps none was permitted. To this day there seems some reason in what Nicolaus said, for all its conventional royalist accent. If his words did not exonerate Herod, at least they showed that the people were not in open rebellion against his rule. There had been many palliatives while the king lived! Cf. below, p. 70 n.

§ 4. *The First Century A.D.*

Just as the full effect of the burden of Solomon's building operations was not felt until his death and a successor came to be chosen, so the full costs of Herod's architectural undertakings were not realized until the end of his reign in 4 B.C. While the king lived, in each case, his own personal influence, the grandeur and magnificence of his plans, the splendour of his foreign alliances, and his friendships with the great ones of the world, the popular veneration and loyalty with which in monarchies the head of the nation is usually enshrined, the religious enthusiasm inspired by the first beginnings of building, or rebuilding, the Temple—all these psychological influences operated to keep the people contented in Herod's days as in the days of Solomon a thousand years before. But the time was to come when the king should die; and then, the secret and growing discontent of those upon whom the burden of taxation fell most heavily becoming longer unbearable, they were sure to rise and voice their wrongs.

The Herodian exchequer seems never to have been empty. In spite of the costs of building cities, harbours, fortifications, and the Temple; in spite of munificent (and not altogether necessary) gifts to cities outside Palestine—a piece of economic and political internationalism partly explained by the widespread dispersion of the Jewish race outside

'the Land'; for all his enormous expenditures at home and his gifts abroad, Herod was able to leave a will bequeathing to his sister Salome 'five hundred thousand [drachmae] of silver that was coined'[1]—besides, as Josephus' words clearly imply, some quantity of the uncoined metal; to other relatives he likewise left money; and to Caesar he willed the immense sum of ten million drachmae.

We are not surprised then to learn that immediately upon Archelaus' accession, the people of Judaea 'made a clamour that he would ease them of some of their annual payments', and 'release those that were put in prison by Herod' [for debt?]; and especially 'that he would take away those taxes which had been severely laid upon what was publicly sold and bought'.[2] Nor are we surprised to hear, a year later, of an embassy sent to Rome to bring charges against the new ruler, and to appeal to the Roman government to take over the administration of Palestine—'that', to quote Josephus, 'being delivered from the kingly and similar forms of government, they might be annexed to the Province of Syria and subject to the governors sent thither; thus it would become manifest whether they were really seditious and given to revolt or not, when they had moderate men set over them'. This was

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* xvii. 8. 1.

[2] *Ant.* xvii. 8. 4. A merchandise tax, like our internal revenue. It was scarcely a tariff, like the duties collected at Palmyra. See App. B.

a most significant demand, and shows the spirit of the time better than anything else. Herod [the elder—with the innuendo, 'like father like son'] had been 'indeed in name a king', Josephus says,

'but he had taken to himself the uncontrollable authority which tyrants exercise over their subjects, and had made use of that authority for the destruction of the Jews, and did not abstain from making many innovations among them besides, according to his own inclinations; and that whereas there were a great many who perished by the destruction which he brought upon them, so many indeed as no other history relates, they that survived were far more miserable than those that suffered under him, not only by the anxiety they were under from his looks and disposition towards them, but from the danger their estates were in of being taken away by him. That he did never leave off adorning those cities that lay in the neighbourhood, but were inhabited by foreigners; while the cities belonging to his own government were ruined and utterly destroyed. That whereas, when he took the kingdom, it was in an extraordinarily flourishing condition, he had filled the nation with the utmost degree of poverty; and when, upon unjust pretences, he had slain any of the nobility, he took away their estates; and when he permitted any of them to live, he condemned them to the forfeiture of what they possessed. And besides the annual impositions which he laid upon every one of them, they were to make liberal presents to himself, to his domestics and friends, and to such of his slaves as were vouchsafed the favour of being his tax-gatherers; because there was no way of obtaining a freedom from unjust violence without giving either gold or silver for it.'[1]

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* xvii. 11. 2. Simkhovitch is doubtless right in

When, therefore, upon a second accusation, Archelaus was banished and Judaea placed under a Roman procurator, it was, it must be remembered, at the Jews' own wish. The Romans were *invited* to take over the management of affairs in Palestine in A.D. 6, even as Pompey had been invited to Jerusalem in 63 B.C. What the Jews expected was undoubtedly the peaceful and equitable establishment of law and order which the Romans undertook to guarantee wherever they went. For 'there is ample evidence that the mass of the people were content to live quietly under the Roman rule, so long as this was exercised with due respect to the religious forms of the nation and their own courts of law, and without oppression of their poverty'.[1]

Perhaps in connexion with this transfer of the government to full Roman jurisdiction took place the census and general assessment of property under Coponius and Quirinius (A. D. 6). New taxes were imposed—a poll-tax on each individual, including (what was hitherto unknown) women and slaves; an income-tax; a percentage of the herds of those who kept cattle; and taxes on land to be paid out of the produce of the harvest.[2] This method of levying imposts roused the indignation of all classes equally.

supposing that the Jews hoped for a larger measure of 'home rule' as a result of annexation. See *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, 1921, *passim*.

[1] G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 447.

[2] Schürer, i. 473 ff., 508 ff.

Ignorant of the Roman Constitution, unaware of the positive and impersonal costs of maintaining a civil organization in Palestine (apart from the whims of kings), the excited masses at once supposed that they were about to witness a repetition of the horrors of the Babylonian Captivity.[1]

Out of this combination of oppression and ignorance and misunderstanding, especially of ignorance and misunderstanding which made the occasional oppression many times more obnoxious and unbearable, grew that seething spirit of unrest which is to be traced through decade after decade of the first century until the open rebellion of 66–70, which ended with the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the newly finished Temple, and the final crushing of the Jewish State. It forms a part of the background of the life of our Lord. It accounts for the extreme initial popularity of His message and that of John the Baptist. The 'multitudes' responded to Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God, even as they had gone out to be baptized by John when he announced the coming of the Messiah-Judge. It was the concern of Jesus' disciples, 'Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' There was political unrest as well as spiritual solicitude behind those words.

The story of that unrest, of its frequent and recurrent outbursts, of its final consequences, fills the

[1] Cf. H. Graetz, *History of the Jews*, 1891, vol. ii, pp. 129 ff.

pages of Josephus' final books of the *Antiquities* and the seven books of his *Jewish War*. The reasons most frequently assigned for this growing hatred of Rome are the religious intolerance of the nation, its native spirit of independence, its unwillingness to suffer any Gentile dominion whatsoever, its unyielding and intransigeant and fanatical devotion to a theory, the dream of a theocratic Utopia.[1] But the narrative of events itself seems to point to another factor, equally, perhaps even more, important. Agitators arose from time to time, like Theudas and Judas of Galilee 'at the time of the taxing'.[2] Theudas, in A. D. 45, gave himself out to be a prophet, persuaded a crowd of followers to accompany him to the river Jordan, where he promised to divide the waters as Moses divided the Red Sea. More and more frequently we hear of 'the robbers', men who took to the wilderness and preyed upon commerce for a livelihood, attacking isolated forces of the Romans wherever they could do so with advantage. *Sicarii*, secret assassins, appeared, who rendered life utterly insecure, even for the Jews themselves. Feuds broke out in Jerusalem. A body of 'Zealots' arose, prepared to die rather

[1] Cf. W. D. Morrison, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 1890, p. 363: 'As the hatred of the Romans arose from religious rather than political causes, so did the hope of purging the Holy Land of its heathen desecrators have its roots in religious rather than political soil.' See also Mathews, *New Testament Times in Palestine*, p. 158, and Schürer, *Geschichte*, i. 485.

[2] Acts v. 36–7.

than yield up their liberties. An Egyptian 'prophet' appeared and led up thousands from the wilderness to the Mount of Olives, promising to show them how at his command the walls of the city should fall and the Romans be destroyed. The crowd was dispersed by the procurator. Albinus, in 62, opened the prisons and thereby filled the country with violence. The completion of the Temple released from employment large numbers of workmen—Josephus says 18,000. Finally, in 64–6, came 'the last and worst of the procurators',[1] Gessius Florus, 'who compelled us,' says Josephus, 'to take up arms against Rome'. Florus tried to remain in influence with both parties in the State—the robbers, whom he secretly supported and to whom he paid blackmail, and the legitimate popular authority in Jerusalem. At last, 'the nation, exasperated by the atrocities of Florus and inflamed by its fanatic and reckless members, whether in the name of religion or of liberty, forced the more staid of its leaders, and even the more astute and influential among these, into open war against Rome'.[2] Endurance could not be stretched farther. Patience was exhausted. 'The dry fuel heaped up through the years had now grown to an immense mass. It lacked only a spark—and the conflagration followed with fearful, elemental power.'[3]

[1] Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 451. [2] *Ib.*
[3] Schürer, *Geschichte*, i. 585.

II

THE ECONOMIC DATA

We are now in a position to examine, one by one, the factors of chief importance in the economic situation of Palestine in the opening years of the first century. There was something decidedly *wrong* in that section of the world in the time of our Lord. Political dissatisfaction or religious fanaticism alone do not seem to be sufficient to account for the immense and continual unrest of the people. Behind these there may have been another cause which brought continually before the people's minds their unhappy state, and made them restless under Roman rule. For their political aspirations—'the desire of liberty', as Josephus calls it—the hunger for independence was not so much a cause of unrest as it was a desired way out of miseries which already existed. And their religious ideals were likewise dreams of release. The theocracy, God's Kingship over Israel, was their surest ground of hope; and the theocracy was to be realized, so prophets and seers and apocalyptists held, by means of a great revolution in this world's affairs, the destruction of the existing world-power, and the inauguration of the Reign or Kingdom of God. But this too was

more than a cause of unrest; it was the expected and longed-for solution of an otherwise insoluble political and economic problem which Jewish Palestine faced. The source of the misery was not the same thing as its anticipated solution. The source was not political or religious, but economic.

§ 1. *The Land and its Products*

Though not a rich land, Palestine was sufficiently self-supporting. In the eyes of its nomadic neighbours to the east and south, it had once seemed a 'land flowing with milk and honey', i. e. better adapted to pastoral pursuits than the desert over which they themselves roved in search of pasture. Its hills were richly forested, as in early Greece and early England. Its valleys, with a soil formed by erosion of the volcanic rock of the north and the limestone and chalk of the southern hills, were fertile enough to produce ordinary crops of grain, to support the vine, the fig, and the olive. In the Jordan valley was found the palm, as for example in the great palm grove north of Jericho, where was also to be found the balsam, so frequently described by Josephus.[1]

[1] 'Palestine was formerly anything but the barren country it now is. In the Negeb, remains of large trees are still found. Job's description of the products of Edom, where he probably lived, are beyond its present climatic possibilities. Whence the change? Originally covered with forests, on man's advent and the development of the civilization we find recorded on the monuments prior

The agricultural methods of the ancient Orient were crude and simple, and do not compare with those devised by modern science. Even though not so productive as the plains of Mesopotamia—and experts to-day are inclined to acquit Herodotus of exaggeration when he describes their extraordinary fertility—Palestine was nevertheless able to supply the needs of its population without recourse to undue and unprofitable importation from outside. Indeed, in the first century, there were extensive exports, as of fish, pickled or salted at Tarichaea and shipped not only to Jerusalem for the feasts, but to Alexandria, Antioch, and even Rome.[1] Fish was the staple food of the poor in the great Graeco-Roman cities, even as it had been at Athens in the days of Antiphanes, who represents the fishmongers haggling over their price of four obols.[2] We have no means of ascertaining the extent of this industry,

to Israel's occupation nudation commenced. This progressed with extraordinary rapidity during the reign of Solomon. In the times of the Assyrians, and after the fall of Jerusalem, its population was deported, irrigation was suspended, the rains falling on unprotected slopes washed the soil down into the valleys, and the hills became bare as to-day' (T. MacCoun, *The Holy Land in Geography and History*, New York, 1897, vol. i, p. 5). The only question one raises is the date of the complete denudation of the hills. The long period following the Arab conquest must not be left out of account. For the palm and balsam, see Josephus, *Ant.* xv. 4. 2; Strabo, xvi. 2. 41.

[1] Cf. Mishna, *Aboda Zara*, 2. 6; *Ned.* 6. 4; Herodotus, ix. 120; Strabo, xvi. 2. 45.

[2] Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece*, p. 308.

but it must have been considerable. There is no evidence, so far as the writer is aware, that production was artificially stimulated (i. e. by fish-hatcheries).[1] However, the Lake of Galilee, with its constant supply of fresh water, its excellent drainage and suitable temperature, must have been the scene of extensive fisheries and an important source of wealth in the days of our Lord. Zebedee had hired servants, and made no objection when his two sons, James and John, left him to conduct the business alone and entered their discipleship to the Master.[2] The water-supply in general was stressed by the author of the Letter of Aristeas, as we have seen.[3] The oil monopoly in Galilee, at the time of the outbreak in A.D. 66, was in the hands of John of Gischala, who reaped sufficient profit to make him a wealthy man and a figure of importance in the revolt.[4] It should be added that he was a very shrewd and unscrupulous man, and one of the original war-profiteers. In general, the land and its waters must have been a vastly more fertile source of the food supply than they are to-day, after twelve centuries of Saracen and Turkish misrule and inactivity.[5]

[1] There were fish-*ponds*, but these were for landscape effects, like the one laid out for Herod, in which his son Aristobulus was drowned (*Ant.* xv. 3. 3). On the *vivaria* of Roman times, see *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 1529.

[2] Mark i. 20.

[3] See §§ 115–17.

[4] Josephus, *War*, ii. 21. ·.

[5] And also, if we are to follow Huntington, *Palestine and its*

Nevertheless, the margin was never wide between supply and demand. There were people who went hungry, especially if the years were lean. We need not go beyond the New Testament to prove this. One of the Messianic hymns which St. Luke gives, the *Magnificat*, speaks of the goodness of God in the time to come—

> 'He hath filled the hungry with good things.'

John the Baptist's fare was locusts (i. e. wild carobs ?) and honey, the food of the poorest in the land. It may not have been wholly ascetical abnegation which prescribed this diet. John was the preacher and prophet of the coming Kingdom, and fared with all others who longingly waited for the redemption of Israel.[1]

The reason for this narrow margin between supply and demand, production and consumption, a condition which is chronic in the Near East and still true to-day, we shall discuss when we come to consider the question of population. The factor of decreasing productivity, which we have already noted, is to be borne in mind. Let us now consider the actual products and resources of the country.

Transformation, Boston, 1911, and others (see the quotation above from MacCoun), as a result of the increasing aridity of the land due to deforestation and climatic changes.

[1] Luke i. 53; Mark i. 6. On the identification of 'locusts' and 'carobs', see art. 'Husks' in *Encyc. Biblica* (T. K. Cheyne); *per contra*, the commentaries in loc., including Strack-Billerbeck, i. 98 ff.

The Graeco-Jewish writer Eupolemus, writing before 100 B.C., reflects the diversified production of Palestine in the letter which he attributes to King Solomon :[1]

'I have also written to Galilee, Samaria and the land of Moab and Ammon, and to Gilead, to supply them from the country with what they require ; ten thousand kors of wheat each month—one kor is seventy gallons ; and ten thousand kors of wine—one kor of wine is equal to ten measures ; oil and other things shall be furnished them from Judaea, but cattle to be slaughtered for food from Arabia.'

The olive, the vine, and the fig were Judaea's staff of life ; wheat, barley, millet, and vegetables were not successfully grown in the south. The very poor lived on sycomore figs and carob pods (St. John's bread). Nuts and almonds, apples, pomegranates, apricots, and mulberries were not unknown. But

'from first to last, it is they (the olive, vine, and fig) which have not only sustained her inhabitants, but by their surplus supplied them with the means of exchange for goods in which their own land was lacking. None of the three grows in Babylonia or Arabia.'[2]

The lack of wheat is reflected in Herod's importations from Egypt and Cyprus during the famine years 'for the cities of Jerusalem', and other

[1] Given in Stearns, *Fragments from Graeco-Jewish Writers*, p. 37 ; Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* ix. 33.

[2] Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 298. It might be added that the olive, the greatest of the three, was also unknown in early Egypt ; see Mahaffy, *Empire of the Ptolemies*, p. 146.

importations when need arose.[1] Under such circumstances it was only natural for speculation in grain to take place. Hence the curse upon 'him that withholdeth grain' in Prov. xi. 26, and the blessing of 'him that selleth it'.[2] So likewise the cattle of Judaea did not compare with those raised in 'Arabia', or on the grassy uplands of north-eastern Palestine—famous for its 'bulls of Bashan'. Sheep in great numbers grazed on the desert's edge in Moab, and goats were common in Gilead. Wool should have been an article of export, though it is curious how few references there are to it. It was the material from which the homespun fabrics of daily wear were made, and no doubt contributed to the economic independence of the country in a way similar to that fostered by the leader Gandhi in India to-day.

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* xv. 9. 2; xx. 2. 5; *War*, i. 15. 6.

[2] One is reminded of the law at Athens against speculation in grain. Athens likewise had to import her wheat, since her chief wealth—at least before the mines at Laurium were exploited—was like that of Jerusalem the olive. The penalty for infringement of the law was death. See Lysias, *Against the Grain-Dealers*, *passim*. This was somewhat severer than the single ethical counsel of Proverbs. But one has to remember that the grain-dealers in Attica were metics—what the Old Testament would have called 'sojourners in the land'. One cannot argue either a greater unscrupulousness or a greater necessity at Athens than in Judaea, with this fact in mind. There is no reason to doubt that the withholder of grain in Palestine was the man who sowed and harvested it—the farmer. Such speculators are to be found in Palestine to-day.

Flax was also cultivated.[1] Galilee has been described by Josephus in brief but magniloquent terms :

'The soil is universally rich and fruitful, and full of the plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation, by its fruitfulness ; accordingly, it is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle. Moreover, the cities lie here very thick ; and the very many villages there are here, are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contains above fifteen thousand inhabitants (!).'[2]

The supply of fish (mentioned as early as Deut. xiv. 9) was first brought to Jerusalem after the Exile by Tyrian traders—the Fish Gate of the city was 'the natural entrance for Phoenicians'.[3] The fish were not brought to the city alive or even fresh, but pickled or salted. The sources of the supply were the Lake of Galilee, the Jordan, the Mediterranean coast, and the Nile delta. Preserved fish could easily be transported long distances in a warm climate, and kept indefinitely in anticipation of the feasts. The city of Tarichaea derived its name from the Greek process of pickling sea-foods ; in the time of Pliny it had become the name of the Lake itself.[4]

[1] Cf. Mishna, *B. Kamma*, 10. 9. Woollen clothing was worn in Judaea ; linen in Galilee.

[2] *War*, iii. 3. 2. We shall have something to say on these figures in the section on Population.

[3] Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 317. Cf. Neh. xiii. 16.

[4] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 15. See Smith, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 451.

The honey mentioned in the Bible was wild honey, found in hollow trees or crevices in the rocks. Apiculture was not unknown in the first century, as we learn from Philo and may deduce from the Mishna; but the μέλι ἄγριον which formed part of the Baptist's fare was still 'honey out of the stony rock', such as might be found in the 'wilderness'.[1]

Salt was found at the Dead Sea, and on the Mediterranean coast between Palestine and Egypt.[2] There is evidence that at one time it was a royal monopoly, as in many other quarters of the ancient and modern world, e. g. ancient Asia Minor and modern Turkey.[3]

The natural building material of the land was stone—the soft and easily worked sandstone and limestone of the south. Harder rock was to be found in Galilee, in the foot-hills of the volcanic Lebanons, and east of the Jordan. Clay was poor and unsatisfactory, though it must have been in common use as roofing material among the poorer classes.[4] Good timber was still to be found in Palestine in the first century: oak, walnut, plane, tamarisk, willow, sycomore (?), and the cedar of Lebanon.

Metals are not found in the rock of Palestine, at least not in sufficient quantity ever to have formed

[1] Mark i. 6; Ps. lxxxi. 6; Philo, ii. 633 (Mangey) = Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* viii. 8; Mishna, *Baba Bathra*, 5. 3, &c.

[2] Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 318; *Hist. Geog.*, p. 157.

[3] Cf. 1 Macc. x. 29; xi. 35.

[4] See Mark ii. 4.

a factor in the economic history of the country.[1] The chief source of gold in ancient times was the Sinaitic peninsula, where copper was also found in abundance. 'The gold of Arabia' was proverbial. Gold had therefore to be imported into Palestine, as in the days of Solomon's vast trade with Sheba and the south generally. Sir G. A. Smith holds that 'the gold of Arabia must have been in large part the secret of the wealth of the Nabataeans, who in the first century before Christ financed Antipater and Herod'.[2] It did not long remain in Palestine, however, as the supply was periodically depleted by the conquerors.

Silver was common, perhaps as common as it is with us to-day in the form of currency (though not for other uses, of course).[3]

Copper (or bronze, which = copper + tin) was common in Palestine, having been found in abundance from early times in the peninsula of Sinai. The 'brass' of the Authorized Version of the Bible is really copper.[4] It was also found in Cyprus, northern Palestine, Edom, and northern Arabia. Iron was found in Mount Carmel and in eastern Palestine, and was known from the seventh century before Christ and onwards. The abandoned mines of copper and iron in the 'neighbouring mountains of Arabia' are mentioned in the Letter of Aristeas, §§ 119–20.[5]

[1] Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 309. [2] *Ib.* 328.
[3] See Kennedy, art. 'Money', in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.
[4] Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 330. [5] See Appendix to this volume.

Lead and tin were rare. The ancient tin trade, as is well known, was in the hands of the Phoenicians, who went as far afield as Cornwall in their search for it. Palestine had little demand for it, as the tin used in making bronze was almost the sole requirement. Bronze foundries were probably far commoner in Phoenicia and Syria than in Palestine.

§ 2. *Labour*

If there were labour problems in first-century Palestine, we hear little or nothing about them. The Epistle of St. James introduces us to a condition of industrial injustice; but we cannot date the epistle exactly, or precisely define its provenance. The peasants of Galilee and Judaea in our Lord's time were no doubt the owners of their little parcels of land, either by inheritance from the Maccabaean days when allotments were made in Galilean territory, or by traditional tribal rights older still (especially in Judaea).[1] But the value of such

[1] Theoretically at least, title to the land was inalienable. Herod, however, contrived to lay hands on the estates of the noble families who fell under his displeasure. See above, Chap. I, § 4. Others succeeded in doing likewise. 'The land even passed out of the hands of the older families into those of merchants, usurers, and rulers, whose official position gave them opportunities to acquire estates mortgaged by their owners to pay the heavy taxes' (Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 367). Cf. Costobarus' 'farms' in the days of Herod, *Ant.* xv. 7. 10. The land held by the Levites in the Levitical cities may never have been more than an ideal of the priestly legislation.

ownership was injured by the proximity of slave labour, as it was throughout the ancient world. The peasant and his family were assured a subsistence —unless the harvests failed. But when he went to market to sell his produce, he might easily be underbidden by the steward from the neighbouring estate, whose fields were tilled by unpaid labour.[1] These great holdings of noble and wealthy houses were worked largely, but not altogether, by slaves (the 'bondservants' of the Revised Version), under the direction of stewards. As it had been in Egypt for centuries, so it was in Palestine, more or less; the noble families were not only the *Kriegsherren*, master warriors, leaders in the defence of the country when threatened from without, and at other times defenders of the peace; they were also great farmers and traders. Even as early as the

It is not easy to dispossess present landowners of their 'parcels of ground', especially in a traditionally agricultural and long-settled country—as the Zionists of to-day have learned.

[1] However, Eduard Meyer's words are to be borne in mind: 'Das intensive Sklavenbedürfnis, der Heisshunger nach Sklaven, welche für die spätere römische Republik so charakteristisch ist, fehlt dem Orient durchaus, weil die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse ganz andere waren' (*Kleine Schriften*, Halle, 1910, p. 192). See, more recently, on the favourable conditions of slave labour in Palestine, M. Sulzberger, *The Status of Labour in Ancient Israel*, Phila., 1923. On the influence of unpaid (slave) labour, see W. W. Tarn, in *The Hellenistic Age*, 1923, p. 123. Tarn refers to Delos.

eighth century before Christ, it was the purchase of the poor man's holdings by the rich, who 'joined field to field until there was no room left' and 'despoiled the poor',[1] that led to the grave economic problems and acute distress of the country population. The occasional use in the parables of our Lord of the relation between master and slave, and between master and steward, is suggestive of the common experience of His hearers. There is more in His parables, of course, than pictures of ordinary life in Palestine; Eastern teachers knew well enough by hearsay what went on in the great world of the North and the West. But the frequency with which He mentions slaves assures us that their state of life and the treatment they received were familiar to all who heard Him. Even in the old patrician days of the Greek period, reflected in Ecclesiasticus, there were households served by bondslaves.

Nevertheless, there were also free labourers in Palestine, such as those whom Herod employed upon the Temple. At the call of the fishermen by the seaside, Zebedee was left alone in the boat 'with the hired servants'.[2] 'The labourer is worthy of his keep,' is a saying found in the oldest gospel source ('Q').[3] The labourers waiting all day in the market-place to be hired are free labourers (Matt. xx. 1–16). The

[1] Isa. iii. 14–15; v. 8.

[2] Mark i. 20.

[3] Matt. x. 10, *τροφή*. Was this a proverb in the first century? Luke's parallel, x. 7, reads *μισθός*, wages.

mowers and reapers in the fields, in the Epistle of James (v. 4), are free labourers, perhaps hired by the day after the ancient custom and the legal tradition (Deut. xxiv. 14–15). There is no hint in the Epistle of slave labour—this is one of the arguments for the Palestinian provenance of the writing.

These data from the New Testament alone are sufficient to indicate that not all labourers in Palestine were slaves, though Luke, a Gentile and not a Palestinian, may have missed the point of our Lord's word in the saying just given. It is significant that Jesus, like some of the rabbinic fathers of Judaism, and like His own interpreter St. Paul, occasionally represented the relationship between men and God as that of slaves and their masters.[1] The free working-men included not only day-labourers but also skilled artisans, craftsmen, many of whom were employed by Herod in his building operations.[2] The bondslaves were the workers in the fields, 'hewers of wood and carriers of water',

[1] Luke xvii. 10; *Pirqe Aboth*, i. 3 (Antigonus of Socho). Paul was Jesus' bondslave (Rom. i. 1). References to slavery are much more frequent in the letters of Paul than in the Gospels. The figure doubtless reflects the social experience and observation of the apostle; it was, moreover, a current religious term in the Hellenistic-Roman world.

[2] Josephus says that 18,000 were employed upon the Temple—a figure far too high, it would seem; 1,800 would have been nearer right, we should suppose. Josephus frequently exaggerates (unless the copyists who handed down his text are responsible).

tillers of the vineyards and olive-groves. We hear of no bondmen rising to eminence in professional life or the skilled trades in Palestine, as often happened in the Graeco-Roman world.

The wages of these labourers were not abnormal, as are the wages of skilled workmen to-day. The 'penny a day' (American Revised Version, 'shilling') in the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard was no longer the good old Greek drachma, which had declined in value, but its Roman equivalent, the silver *denarius*, worth nearly 20 cents or about 10*d*.[1]

[1] It was a not unknown practice in ancient international politics as in modern to debase, if possible, the coinage of enemy countries. Sometimes this was done to the coinage of subject states: e. g. the treatment of Aegina by Argos in the seventh century B. C., a very early example. But the decline in value of the drachma in the Near East during the centuries following the Roman advance is scarcely to be accounted for in this way. It had begun before the Romans arrived, in the prosperous days following Alexander's conquest. In the Roman period the denarius was as common as the American dollar; see the Tariff Decree of Palmyra in the Appendix. Relatively to standards of living, the comparison of the denarius and the dollar is probably not far wrong—or would not have been, say, between 1885 and 1900. It was the standard day's wage of a labourer, and that gave it its value. Its purchasing power depended chiefly upon that, and upon the total production of the country over and above the needs for bare subsistence. This standard remained for many centuries, as we may learn from the Talmud. 'Der Lohn, durchschnittlich ein Denar pro Tag und Kopf, soll in Geld bezahlt werden, doch kann der Wirt ihm (the labourer) auch ein Deputat an Naturalien zuweisen, nach Natur der Sache gewöhnlich von der in Arbeit befindlichen

This seems to the ordinary reader a poor return—in normal times, let alone to-day, with our extraordinary wages and prices, $5–10 a day for skilled labour; 15 cents for a loaf of bread, $8 for a pair of shoes. But one wonders what the old Athenian ecclesiasts of the days of Aristotle would have thought to see common labourers receiving an equivalent of their high salaries![1]

Although, therefore, the Greek period in the Near East, introduced by Alexander's conquest, probably saw a widespread increase of prosperity, a new development of trade, and a general expansion of industry, the benefits accrued more largely to the great proprietors than to the common people. This had its good side, as seen in the vast building projects of the Greek and Roman periods (see Chap. I, §§ 1 and 3, above). But it must also have had its bad side. Such undertakings are not possible, ordinarily, without relatively low wages. The burden of such efforts thus fell in two ways upon the

Materie' (S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, Leipzig, 1911, vol. ii, p. 105).

[1] The Greek Assemblymen received a drachma a day (Aristotle, *Athen. Resp.*, § 62). Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 120. Perhaps they would have thought much the same as judges to-day are thinking, and college professors and clergymen, while carpenters and plumbers receive higher wages than professional men! On the fluctuation of wages in the early Hellenistic period, see W. W. Tarn's essay in the recent Cambridge volume, *The Hellenistic Age*, 1923.

peasantry : in *taxes*, direct and indirect, which made possible the accumulation of funds to finance the building schemes ; and in *wages* low enough to carry them out.[1] There was no political slogan, 'Pass prosperity around', in the days of the Seleucids, the Maccabees, or the Herods. Indeed, it was never heard in ancient times. At most, the king—or the landlord—must not become too prosperous at the expense of his subjects or tenants ; and they were to share in his glory or prosperity. On its very best side, it was the feudal or manorial conception of prosperity that prevailed. There were some rich men who 'wore purple and fine linen, living in mirth and splendour every day' ; but they were mostly

[1] It is to be remembered, however, that what Herod spent on architecture, another king—one of the ambitious later Maccabees, for example—might have spent upon some fatuous military scheme. If he was nothing else, Herod was a 'constructive ruler'. One wonders if objection would have been made to the taxes had he been waging a war of independence against the Romans ! One wonders also if any of the fanatic Messianists of the first century, Zealots, *sicarii*, or even pious theocrats and Pharisees who disdained 'the wicked power', ever 'sat down first to count the cost' of a war with Rome. Had they done so, the disasters of 70 and 135 might never have occurred (cf. Josephus, *Life*, §§ 4, 5 ; and Simkhovitch, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, ch. vi). That the burden of costs of restoring the Temple was recognized even from the start is indicated by the words of Josephus (*Ant.* xv. 11. 1), 'Inasmuch as he knew that the multitude were not ready nor willing to assist him in so vast a design, he thought to prepare them first by making a speech to them, and then set about the work itself'.

'in kings' houses', i. e. connected with the Government or, perhaps, the tax-collection. With some exceptions, the impression we receive is that the wealth of the 'rich' was not extraordinary. There was nothing to compare with the fabulous fortunes of late republican and early imperial Rome.[1]

We must be careful not to exaggerate. The mass of the population was still rural and not urban in Palestine during the early part of the first century, though the city-ward movement deplored by the author of the Letter of Aristeas doubtless still continued.[2] The Hebrew tradition still pictured 'every man sitting under his own vine and fig-tree'. The vast city-populations of Italy, western Asia Minor, the Nile delta, and the upper Syrian coast were not to be found in Jewish territory. The tide of urban population was rising throughout the Mediterranean world; but agricultural Palestine still stood out boldly against it. There was danger ahead, though it had not yet come into full view.

[1] Cf. Luke xvi. 19; Matt. xi. 8. The rich 'fool' in the parable (Luke xii. 16–21) seems not to have been extraordinarily opulent—it is his materialism, not his industry, enterprise, or success, that our Lord rebuked. Any one, apparently, might invite his 'rich' neighbours to a feast (Luke xiv. 12). And the wealthy father of the Prodigal (Luke xv. 11–32) celebrates his son's return by ordering 'the' fatted calf to be slain; the scene is one of pastoral, if not patriarchal, simplicity.

[2] §§ 108–13. See the Appendix to this volume.

§ 3. *Trade*

We have already mentioned the development of trade, i. e. of the international exchange of commodities, in the period following Alexander. The contrast between the narrow and exclusive religious community of the days of Ezra, and what we find in the New Testament, Josephus, and the Mishna, is striking. It could not well be otherwise, in spite of Jewish conservatism and exclusiveness. Palestine was the great 'land-bridge' between Asia and Europe and Africa, between the Euphrates Valley on the north, *Arabia Felix* on the south, and the Mediterranean world.

Efficient imperialism, of course, could not afford to recognize the scruples of a nation of religious bigots who happened to sit in the way of an expanding commerce. The old roads from north to south, from Damascus across Galilee to the plain of Sharon and so on along the coast to Egypt; the roads from Decapolis to the sea; from Antioch and Tyre, Ptolemais and Caesarea up to Samaria (Sebastê), Jericho, and Jerusalem; from the East Jordan country, Arabia, Petra, across southern Palestine to Gaza and the highway to Egypt—these roads naturally had to be kept open, however much the inhabitants of the adjoining country hated the intrusion of foreigners. And down these arteries flowed the warm blood of traffic. This meant not

only that new wares were to be found in the bazaars and markets of the Jewish land; it meant also khans for travellers; and it meant, in the Roman days, good roads under military supervision and protection. Actual 'Roman roads' were not laid in Palestine before the time of the Antonines. Yet there existed in the days of Augustus an imperial service of post-horses and carriages—the *cursus publicus*, with its *mansiones* or chief stations, and *mutationes* where horses were changed. There were still robbers, even along the highways through the mountains—as described in our Lord's Parable of the Good Samaritan. But the 'Roman peace' had arrived, and highwaymen were finding their profession less safe and less lucrative.[1]

The great deterrent to commerce, however, was not highway robbery, or even blackmail (the *baksheesh* still demanded in that country and throughout the Levant); it was the artificial restraint of trade on the part of the Jewish population. The motive of this restraint was not economic, as had been Peisistratus' embargo on all exports from Athens

[1] There was, however, a great increase in brigandage under the later procurators, when the civil administration was thrown into chaos by a growing spirit of lawlessness and rebellion, and when the procurators themselves were often allied with the party of 'the robbers'. See Chap. I, § 4, above. 'Robbers' were of course to be found in other parts of the Empire. See the very interesting essay, 'Communications and Commerce', in *The Legacy of Rome*, Oxford, 1923.

other than olive oil, or the modern Turkish embargo on all export of food-stuffs whatsoever. Instead, it was a religious prohibition. The upright Israelite must not purchase any article that has had defiling contact with idolatry; nor must he sell what will be put by Gentiles to such uses. For the full bearing of these restrictions, see the tractate *Aboda Zara* in the Mishna.[1] At the same time, prophets and ethical counsellors had warned against the luxuries of the Gentiles—the profligacy and extravagance of Tyre and Egypt were a prophetic commonplace and horrible example, echoed in the apocalyptic literature.[2]

No doubt this rendered the Jewish population more self-supporting, since their exports were few; and it kept the population at home in the fatherland as long as people could afford to stay. Moreover, it had its effect in building up the integrity of national character. For, in the first place, Palestine

[1] For example, 'It is forbidden to have business dealings with Gentiles for three days before their festivals, to lend them anything or to borrow from them; no money loan may be given to them, or taken from them, and repayment for a debt may neither be made nor taken' (1. 1). 'In the land of Israel, no one may let houses to them nor fields' (1. 8). 'No one may place animals in inns kept by heathen' (2. 1). 'It is forbidden to transact business with those on their way to the heathen market, but permitted with those returning thence' (2. 3), &c. See Elmslie's edition, in *Texts and Studies*, Cambridge, 1911.

[2] e. g. the Apocalypse of John (in the New Testament), ch. xviii.

was easily self-supporting on its own standards of living (which were not Graeco-Roman, of course); and in the second place, there were few indigenous luxuries—none to exchange for, or even to rival, the precious wares of the Gentiles. The Oriental had some luxuries, to be sure, such as gems and fine fabrics; but they scarcely compared with the potteries, ointments, dyed fabrics, engraved gems, statuary, furniture, and edible delicacies of the Western world. These occidental luxuries had no doubt become so indispensable to the Graeco-Roman 'classes' that we can easily imagine Gentiles (especially their ladies) leaving Palestine with a sigh of relief and an exclamation anticipatory of John Lothrop Motley's famous Bostonian aphorism, 'Let these wretched people keep their necessities—only give me the luxuries of the world outside!' It is the sentiment of returning colonial officials the world over and in every age. It must have been felt more than once as the ships weighed anchor in the harbour of Caesarea and headed north and west for the long voyage back to the Tiber's mouth and the gay centre of the world's urbanity and 'civilization'.[1]

[1] Sir G. A. Smith has described the precarious economic situation of the city of Jerusalem all through its history as a political and religious capital—'with large non-producing elements among her population, courtiers, priesthood, and a mercenary garrison; always, be it remembered, in a territory less fruitful of some of the necessaries of life than the surrounding regions, with no opportunity for large industries, and aloof from the great trade routes of the

§ 4. *Finance*

Philo of Alexandria more than once dwells upon the great wealth of the Jewish people,[1] which enabled them to become creditors of their Gentile neighbours, and which he assures his readers to be

country' (*Jerusalem*, i. 313). The Letter of Aristeas, § 114, called the capital 'a city of many arts', *polytechnic*; but its author is doubtless to be pardoned a slight exaggeration of enthusiasm in a letter addressed, obviously, to an intelligent Egyptian. His statement is to be offset by Apollonius of Rhodes, quoted in Josephus, *Against Apion*, ii. 14, who describes the Jews as an uninventive people who 'have made no improvements in human life'. The Jew, i.e. the Judaean or Jerusalemite in particular, was thus forced to become a trader by the circumstances of his native habitat. The site of the City of David had been chosen for the erection of a fortress, first of all, and later made the religious capital of Judaism—of course, for no economic reason whatsoever; and unfortunate economic conditions plagued its existence for ages. The poverty of the 'saints which are in Jerusalem', for whom Paul took up a collection, was only the first Christian instance of Jerusalemite indigence and lack of resources. What the Jew became by economic necessity and geographical advantage, he has remained throughout his later history. Smith even thinks that trade organizations with foreign correspondents and agents were in existence in the first century (*Jerusalem*, i. 370 f.; see Josephus' account of the trade of the Babylonian Jews, *Ant.* xviii. 9; xx. 2. 3). It is noteworthy that in our Lord's parables, which reflect conditions in Galilee, there are numerous references to trading, fishing, and farming, but few to handicrafts, such as building, though He was Himself a carpenter.

[1] *On Rewards*, § 17; *On Curses*, § 9. Cf. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, ii. 315–22.

an overflow or outward token of the heavenly wisdom and righteousness with which his nation was blessed. There has been more than one period, at least since his time, when Philo's argument might have been advanced! One wonders, naturally, whether he was writing of Jews in Palestine or in the Diaspora. There is little question that he refers to the latter, and that such only would be understood by his readers—the Jews whom they themselves knew.

In Palestine, on the other hand, there were two factors which affected financial stability. One was the absence of the precious metals.[1] The importance of this fact for Hebrew and Jewish history is obvious at once, if we remember what the silver mines at Laurium meant for Athens, or the manner in which Alexander's conquests were financed—or even the Peloponnesian war, before Alexander's effort.[2] The second factor was the old-fashioned use of coined metal in exchange (and sometimes even the barter of goods). Modern paper money was unknown—it is not accepted even to-day in Syria: as a result the country is full of foreign gold.[3] Hence, when the primitive Hebrew custom of barter gave way as the invariable medium of trade, and the local government possessed no right of coinage (save for

[1] See above, under § 1.

[2] Cf. Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, esp. III. x, xvi, xvii, and Conclusion.

[3] Or was, before the war. See Baedeker, *Guide-book to Palestine*, p. xxix.

a brief time under the Maccabees and except for Herod's small bronze 'coppers'), it was *foreign coinage* which became the currency of Palestine. For example, it was the shekel of Tyre and Sidon which was the standard sacred Temple shekel in the first century.[1] The significance of this fact is that the metal value of this currency was fixed outside Jewish territory; it might be withdrawn without warning, or it might be debased. And its purchasing value was determined by commodities outside the country, over whose fluctuations Palestinian production and consumption exercised no control. If the conditions of commerce and industry had been in the first century what they are to-day, Palestine would in this way have been in the economic death-grip of foreign powers. What saved the country was: (1) its agricultural self-sufficiency; (2) the survival of barter;[2] and (3) the fact that the Roman Government, at least before the time of Nero, was shrewd enough (as the Greeks had not been) to standardize its coinage and prohibit debasement.

The use of small silver and bronze coins in Palestine has been taken as proof that the people were in poverty. This may possibly be true, but the

[1] The Maccabaean coinage was almost as much an episode in Jewish monetary history as the coinage of the revolution in A. D. 66–70.

[2] Note that even the *loans* in the parables of Jesus are repaid in commodities: '100 measures of oil', &c.

argument is hazardous. Witness the prevalence of the American one-cent piece even to-day, at a time of extraordinary prices and abnormal profligacy in spending.

There were not many large accumulations of capital in the land. The Parable of the Talents may presuppose no more than a current rumour of the immense wealth in the cities and lands of the Gentiles, though Herod's ample treasury is not to be forgotten.[1] Josephus describes a deposit of 5,000 talents in the Tomb of David—a safe enough deposit vault in those times. The Temple treasury was, however, the national bank.[2] Even in the year 63 B.C., the date of Pompey's conquest, that general found 2,000 talents of sacred money in the Temple, which he left untouched. This was in addition to private deposits. The sight must have had some influence on him, nevertheless, for he exacted a tribute of over 10,000 talents from the nation as its share in the costs of his expedition.

Since private deposits were left at the Temple for safe-keeping, there is some question what the 'bankers' of the country did, besides changing and lending money. They may have furnished credit, or even have managed safety deposit vaults. The

[1] And it is to be noted that Luke xix. 13 reads *minas* instead of talents—reducing the sums by 98 per cent. !

[2] The practice of private deposits doubtless began in times of public danger or unrest, when private bankers could not be trusted ; see 2 Macc. iii. 15. Cf. Josephus, *War*, i. 13. 9; vi. 5. 2.

Parable of the Talents assumes the custom of depositing money with the bankers, and receiving interest upon it: 'Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest' (Matt. xxv. 27). But exchange alone was lucrative enough, as it is to-day in Palestine, with the double standard of the Government (*ṣāgh*) and of trade and ordinary life (*shuruk*—which varies greatly in different towns, and averages about one-eighth less than the Government standard).

As in the Old Testament and Koran, the charging of interest was forbidden. But this was understood to apply only to members of the Jewish nation. Gentiles were not included—as Philo's words suggest, and as the Old Testament definitely implies (Exod. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 36). As a matter of fact, there would scarcely have been any other inducement than a high return in interest for Jews to risk their money in enterprises managed by Gentiles; religious prohibitions stood in the way, and dishonesty was common.[1] What rate was charged, we do not know. The lowest present rate in Palestine is said to be[2] 12 per cent. Considering the risks involved and the uncertainty of repayment, this rate was probably not extortionate. Yet it was high enough to forbid the

[1] See the notes upon *Aboda Zara*, ed. Elmslie, referred to above.

[2] Or was, before the war; see Baedeker, *Guide-book*, p. 89 f.

expansion of credit to anything like the immense proportions of the present day.[1]

§ 5. *Population*

We come now to the factor of most vital significance for our study—population. Although Josephus' figures are exaggerated, as are those of the

[1] The usual rate of interest charged at Athens in the classical period varied from 12 to 36 (!) per cent. This was probably due to the fact that much of the money invested at Athens went into ships and cargoes, for which there existed no marine insurance to cover losses; piracy and frequent warfare added to the natural hazards of the sea. By Roman times the rate had been standardized, and though high in comparison with modern rates, a maximum for ordinary business was fixed at 12 per cent. This maximum was set, e. g. by Cicero when he administered the Province of Cilicia. Cf. arts. in the classical dictionaries, s.v. *Fenus*. One may compare with this the rate commonly charged in this country and in Canada in the pioneering days a generation or two ago: 12 and 14 per cent. were common. Nothing shows the stabilizing effect of the Roman conquest, nor the vast material advantage of the imperial system (at least under the early Empire) over the state of things which had preceded it around the eastern Mediterranean, more than this very reduction of the interest rate upon borrowed money. Prosperity and security went hand in hand.

The small coinage of Palestine in the first century has been discussed by Sir G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 429 f. It is to be noted that a smaller denomination was introduced by the procurators, chiefly the *quadrans* (Gk. *kodrantes*). The *quadrans* = $\frac{1}{4}$ *as* (or assarion) = 2 *lepta* ('mites'). When it is remembered that the *as* = $\frac{1}{16}$ *denarius*, the extreme minuteness of values represented by the two smaller coins becomes apparent. The *stater* of Tyre = 1 *tetradrachm* = 1 shekel, paid the Temple tax for two persons (half-shekel each), as in the incident related in Matt. xvii. 27, our

Old Testament,[1] Socin says, 'The number 2½–3 millions may indeed be taken as a maximum. The population can hardly ever have been more than four times its present strength, which is estimated at 650,000 souls. Thus in its most flourishing period about 250–300 inhabitants would go to the square mile—while at the present there may be about 65, a number which is rather above than below the mark.'[2] The area of Palestine is approximately 10,500 square miles, or about the size of New Hampshire; and like mountainous New Hampshire only a part of it is habitable.[3] Since the Old Testament figures assume a population almost as dense as that of Belgium (635 per square mile) for

Lord and Peter paying together. The *tetradrachm* used in Palestine was Antiochene in origin, as was also, perhaps, the *didrachm*. The drachma was ordinarily accepted as equivalent to the *denarius* (compare the American and Canadian dimes), but for tariff purposes was accepted at only ¾ the value of the denar. Note that the Palmyrene tariff is collectable in denarii, not drachmae. The denarius, worth 18–19 cents or 9½*d.*–10*d.*, was the day labourer's usual wage—see § 2, above.

[1] At least in the readings of our present manuscripts.

[2] *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 3550. Cf. the figures given by R. A. S. Macalister in *Enc. Brit.*, xx. 604. Dr. Macalister has been for years a resident of Palestine and director of the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

[3] But who could wish to trade the scenery of New Hampshire for a larger population? Its population has risen steadily from 141,885 in 1790 to 443,083 in 1920. Its total area is 9,341 square miles, of which 310 are water surface. Its topography and population alike, therefore, compare with those of modern Palestine.

all Palestine, with its many 'waste places' and mountain districts, they must be greatly exaggerated —and Josephus still more so, who gives 3 millions for Galilee alone![1] To-day the population of all Syria is only 3¼ millions, i. e. 27–30 to the square mile. As Masterman says, 'Were the statements of Josephus correct, we should find enormous areas of ruins covering acres of the hillsides of the country'.[2]

Although there are to-day 650,000 inhabitants in Palestine, the country could of course support a much larger population, with modern methods of agriculture and industry—as the Zionists are prepared to demonstrate, after careful investigation and considerable experiment. It may not be unjust to assume, therefore, that in the first century the population of Palestine numbered between two and three millions.[3] For purposes of comparison we may note that England in 1630 numbered 5,500,000, living in a country with 50,851 square miles, and was over-populated at that! The growth of trade and industry made possible an increase, till in 1831 (200 years later) the population numbered 14,000,000. The latest census gives 36,000,000 or 701 to the square mile.[4] Modern industry, in spite of some disadvantages, certainly makes possible larger popu-

[1] Josephus, *Life*, § 45; *War*, iii. 3. 2.

[2] E. W. G. Masterman, *Studies in Galilee*, Chicago, 1909, p. 132.

[3] It might be safer to say 1½–2½ millions.

[4] Ely, *Economics*, 38th ed. (1916), p. 435. Lower figures are given in *Encyc. Brit.*, ix. 418. Cf. *Statesman's Year-Book*, 1923, pp. 12 ff.

lations; it reduces the death-rate and at the same time produces a larger sustenance from the earth. Ancient populations were as a rule more stationary, like that of Japan before its industrial reorganization in the nineteenth century.[1]

But the population of ancient Palestine was *not* stationary. The centuries following Ezra and Nehemiah had seen a gradual expansion of the Jewish population in the land, both by natural increase and by the influx of *rapatriés* from Egypt, Babylon, and elsewhere. Following the Maccabaean successes, the extent of the Jewish territory proper was further increased. By the time of Herod, a century later, this territory was fully populated. A century more, and Josephus' figures could be published (since there was no census to verify them) without much fear of contradiction and with a certain amount of plausibility. The Jews were a prolific race, and prosperous as well. They expanded to the very limits of the food supply, and beyond. Now most fertile nations are relieved of over-congestion and exhaustion of their food-supply by: (1) colonization, (2) individual or family

[1] The overwhelming population of to-day, which threatens the peace of the Far East and of the world, is thus almost certainly a direct result of the industrial reorganization. From 1723 to 1846, as proved by temple records, the population was almost stationary (26 millions) save for five periods of decline. Since the latter date, the number has almost doubled, with 49 millions in 1907 (330 to the square mile). See *Encyc. Brit.*, xv. 164.

emigration, or (3) by conquest.[1] But the Jews were not a military people, and, therefore, could not seize outside territory, save for a brief time under the later Maccabees ; and after the first part of the first century before Christ the Roman Empire stood in their way. The Diaspora was thus their only safety-valve. The vast numbers and varying social and economic status of the Alexandrian, Roman, Ephesian, Antiochene, Tarsian, and Babylonian *ghettos* are fairly familiar to us from Josephus, Philo, the Talmud, and other sources.[2] Yet the Diaspora, vast as it was, proved an insufficient safety-valve. For there was always a counter-current of families returning to Palestine. Naturally, for the most part, these would be families in fairly good circumstances : elderly people who came back to die in the land of their fathers, and those whose religion bade them return to the Holy Land. At the same time, there was a strong religious motive forbidding the emigration of those who had been born there. It was the land promised by God to their fathers, ' to Abraham and his seed for ever '. It was more than a *patria*, a fatherland : it was the Land of Promise, the land where the golden age was to dawn, where the Reign

[1] Or at least by war, which in ancient times decimated both sexes—and the entire family, through slavery, in case of defeat—not merely the male sex as in Europe since the days of chivalry.

[2] See Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, Paris, 1914 ; Radin, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans*, Phila., 1915 ; and Schürer, *Geschichte*, § 31.

of God was to be established and the prophecies receive their fulfilment.

Jewish territory is always over-populated. This is almost an axiom of political history during the Christian era. Ancient Palestine was crowded to its very limit. And if we add to this the numerous representatives of the Roman military establishment in Palestine, the soldiers and officers and their families;[1] if we add also the annual influx of

[1] Garrisons of foreign soldiers had been known in Palestine since the days of the Seleucids; a Syrian garrison held the 'Acra' in Jerusalem all through the Maccabaean War of Independence. The Maccabees were supported both by paid levies of their own countrymen (1 Macc. xiv. 32, Simon) and by foreign mercenaries; Hyrcanus I and Alexander Jannaeus hired large bodies of foreign soldiers (Josephus, *War*, i. 2. 5, 4. 5; *Ant.* xiii. 8. 4). Herod had a body-guard of Thracians, Germans, and Gauls, without whose protection he would have been insecure upon his throne. These were paid in rations, booty, and money (*War*, i. 15. 6, 18. 3, 33. 9). Antipas's mercenaries were paid wages (Luke iii. 14, ὀψώνια). The Romans had only auxiliary troops (Schürer, i. 459 ff.). These were made up of non-Jews—chiefly, perhaps, Samaritans (*Sebasteni*). They numbered about 3,000—not a large force by any means, but foreigners, and hence a constant aggravation to the Jews. In addition to the troops were of course a small army of officials attached to the procurator's staff, their servants, &c. (Arnold, *Roman Provincial Administration*, ch. iv; Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 348). The actual growth of the city of Jerusalem in our period is proved by the erection of the third wall by Agrippa I, in the reign of Claudius. It took in Bezetha, the new suburb north of the city, and may have extended as far in that direction as the site of the present Church of St. Stephen. Other suburbs are mentioned in the New Testament: Bethphage, Olivet, Bethany, Siloam.

pilgrims, coming by the thousands to observe the sacred festivals (many of them poor, not like our rich tourists going once in ten years to Oberammergau)—it is not difficult to conceive a situation in which the menace of over-population became an actual danger with scarcely any remedy at hand.

§ 6. *Government and Taxation*

The final factors which we shall consider are taxation—the secular tribute—and the religious dues. To obtain a just view of the conditions of the times, we must bear in mind that all foreign domination was as such obnoxious to the Jew. This was not only because of his racial pride or his unconquerable distaste for imperialism: for even after twelve centuries of settled life he was still a son of the desert, like his Arab neighbours and the followers of Emir (now King) Feisal in our day.[1] Even more, it was on account of his religion. It was his deepest conviction that Israel could have no king but God—or a ruler directly appointed by Him. If other lords ruled over the people, it was only for a time and as a punishment for their sin.

It is often said that the Messianic hope revived in

[1] Benziger, art. 'Taxation and Tribute', *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, 4905: 'The nomads of the Arabian desert know nothing of tax or tribute, either to their sheiks or to Allah; so far indeed from finding a source of revenue in their people, the sheiks are under obligation to spend their own private fortune for the public good. . . . Often enough, . . . this ends in poverty.'

the first century because the Jewish nation was 'groaning under the Roman yoke'.[1] Yet, as Schürer has indicated,[2] the Roman government of Palestine was no worse than that of the other provinces—except under the later procurators, who were little men, vexed by an insoluble problem, and possessed with no feeling for the sensibilities of their subjects. The positive demands made upon the people were not great, and are hardly to be compared with the exactions of foreign rulers in earlier periods. After the reforms of Augustus, the provinces fared better than ever before. An 'era of good feeling' and general prosperity was introduced. But Palestine was not in a position to benefit directly by these reforms. Local reigning houses, the Herods and the hierarchy in Jerusalem, had to be considered; and only gradually, as the century advanced, did the Roman administration take full control.

Nevertheless, more than the mere fact of alien government was involved, and its justice or injustice of practice. The nation felt the burden *economically*. There are always, among subject peoples, those who acquiesce, prosper, and make the best of things. Very often, the uncompromising nationalists are in the minority. So it was in first-century Palestine, with its demagogues, 'robbers', and later revolu-

[1] e. g. D. Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 6, and others.

[2] *Geschichte*, i. 453, 485. A similar view is taken by S. Mathews, in *A History of New Testament Times in Palestine*.

tionary Zealots. But to keep a whole people, or even a majority, in a perpetual ferment of unrest, there must exist conditions—in some way attributable to the 'oppressor'—which bring this oppression home to them. There are two or three conspicuous examples of this very condition in our own world at the present time. That such conditions actually existed in Palestine in the first century, we have no difficulty in discovering. And they were *conditions which the Roman officials, under existing circumstances, could do nothing whatsoever to alter.* Even had they possessed the will and the skill to do it, they could not have applied the necessary remedy. The civil or political taxation was imposed over and above the religious dues demanded of the Jewish nation by the Law. The Law had been established as the theoretical legislation of the priestly theocracy, in which no provision was made for civil or military obligations. *Under the Romans, therefore, there was a twofold taxation of the Jewish people, civil and religious; each of these had been designed without regard to the other, and therefore could not be modified in its favour.*

Herod's taxation, which Josephus estimates[1] at 1,200 talents ($1,200,000), had been onerous enough. The revenues of Herod Agrippa I, fifty years later, he estimates at 12 million drachmae ($2,400,000).[2] Such disparity, allowing Agrippa twice the income

[1] *Ant.* xvii. 11. 4; the total is what *we* estimate, using Josephus' figures.

[2] *Ant.* xix. 8. 2.

of Herod, seems impossible. Mommsen assumes that Herod's chief income was from direct taxation of the fruits of the soil.[1] In the Syrian period it was customary for a time to exact a third part of the grain, and half the wine and oil.[2] In the time of Caesar, a fourth part of what was sown was required at Sidon 'in the second year'.[3] These taxes were,

[1] It is almost impossible to account for Herod's wealth as the result of taxation levied upon the agricultural or fishing industries of the country (not to mention the handicrafts!). There is a probability that it was amassed from tariffs and customs duties, in large measure, upon goods which passed through his territory or were handled by Jewish merchants and traders in the land. The importance of such a source of State income is clearly recognized at Palmyra, where the duties are carefully established and a large body of municipal officers entrusted with their supervision. See the Decree given in the Appendix. Mommsen's view is stated in *Röm. Gesch.*, v. 511, note. A produce-tax would be hard to enforce, however, unless the produce were brought to the city to be sold, when it would be subject to the market-tax or tariff—with which, accordingly, it appears to be identical.

[2] This must have been a reparations tax. It was too severe a burden to be borne permanently. The statements occur in the rescript of Demetrius, 1 Macc. x. 30. One is reminded of the exorbitant taxation of the Napoleonic period—51 per cent. in some instances. But it was not for long that such rates prevailed; and even so Europe was slow in recovering from the strain. They were a factor in producing some of the evils associated with—and commonly attributed to—the 'industrial revolution'. Even the post-war taxation of to-day (in Great Britain, 25 per cent.) is felt as an enormous burden.

[3] Though it is difficult to make sense of what Josephus gives us on this point, *Ant.* xiv. 10. 6 (Schürer thinks the text corrupt).

however, subject to change, and may not have been permanent. In the time of Tiberius, according to Tacitus, complaint was made and a petition offered for their reduction.[1] The total taxation included also other classes of impost, customs, sales-taxes upon merchandise, import tariffs,[2] highway and bridge tolls, poll-taxes ('enrolment'), and so on. 'The detailed and reliable account of the taxing under Quirinius shows with perfect clearness', says Mommsen, 'that the land had heretofore been free from Roman taxes.'[3] It was partly the method, partly the positive burden, of the taxation which roused the opposition of the people.[4]

Annual tribute was exacted 'for the city of Jerusalem' except in the Sabbatical year. The 'second year' probably means that following the Sabbatical, which was thus exempted. It is to be noted that the tithe paid to the Temple in Jerusalem was in addition to this tax—a total, at least in 'the second year', of 35 per cent., not mentioning the 'tithes' to Hyrcanus and his sons!

[1] 'Provinciae Syria atque Judaea, fessae oneribus, diminutionem tributi orabant' (*Annals*, ii. 42).

[2] Octroi duties, like those of Palmyra; cf. Appendix.

[3] *Gesch.*, v. 501 n. From 'taxes', but not from tribute, direct or indirect (e. g. Herod's 'gifts'); see above, pp. 40, 48; and Josephus, *Ant.* xiv. 4. 4; *War*, i. 7. 6; Schürer, i. 338.

[4] The traditional royal requisition of the 'king's mowings' (Amos vii. 1) was retained by the Roman governors of Syria for the maintenance of their cavalry, and was collected annually in the month Nisan (R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 228). Tribute in produce had been levied by Herod (*Ant.* xv. 9. 1—remitted in the famine year, when also he found it necessary to maintain 50,000 men, according to 9. 2, whom he sent into the country at

§ 7. *Religious Dues*

The religion of Judaism, in the first century, was organized upon the theory of *theocracy*; the Jew had no king but God. This is to say more than that

the approach of harvest). There was a Roman tax on the buying and selling of fruit in the market, from which the Jews were released by Vitellius (*Ant.* xviii. 4. 3). Was this, however, only for the duration of the Passover? And does it throw any light upon the 25 per cent. tax on fruit and grain at Sidon? On the various Roman personal, property, and market taxes, see Schürer, § 17 c; and on the taxing under Quirinius, § 17, excursus.

The publicans seem to have been entrusted with the collection of customs duties, not the regular tribute, φόρος. The Seleucids, the Maccabees, Herod, and the Romans all took toll of the commerce which crossed Palestine north and south, east and west. Herod carefully fortified two passes through the Judaean and Samarian hills. He also took tolls at Gaza. The publicans are described in Strabo, xvi. 27, and Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 12. 32. Zacchaeus at Jericho was an ἀρχιτελώνης, perhaps an imperial publican (?) (Luke xix. 1 f.). 'With the restrictions that Roman citizens should be free, the empire granted the customs of cities and kingdoms confederate with Rome to their own governments' (Smith, *Jerusalem*, i. 342). So it was in Palestine under Herod the Great, and in Galilee in the time of our Lord under Herod Antipas. Matthew at Capernaum was very likely (so Schürer) 'an official or lessee of the customs under Herod the tetrarch'. So it was also at Palmyra in the second century (see Appendix). One result of this difference between Judaea and Galilee may have been that the burden of tribute and tolls was not felt to be so onerous in Galilee as in Judaea, at the very gates of both the Temple and the praetorium. The economic dependence of Jerusalem is also to be remembered. Galilee was far more independent.

it was intensely nationalistic in outlook, or that Jewish nationalism was intensely and completely religious. It means that the ordinary civil tax, which in other nations went to support the Government, to equip and pay armies and build navies, was a religious tax, and went to Jerusalem to support the priestly hierarchy and the Temple worship. By the Old Testament legislation, this tax was definitely and explicitly required—not only a percentage, the tithe, but also stated amounts, such as first-fruits, redemption money, and the Temple tax.

Schürer says :[1]

'The contributions which the priests received from the people for their support before the Exile were variable and irregular. After the Exile, they were immeasurably increased. In this connexion, it is noteworthy how greatly the priesthood grew in power and influence under the new order of things which succeeded the Exile. The truth is that this increase in power was not only the cause of their increasing claims to authority, but also a result of the enlargement of their material income. The later scribes, who were not always favourably minded toward the priesthood, were unable to alter the situation : for the priestly law had long been accepted as the Law of God. Indeed, the scribes succeeded only in still further increasing this traditional source of priestly income. Upon the principle that a man acquired the more of merit in the sight of God as he the more punctiliously and readily fulfilled the requirements of the Law, they interpreted the legal obligations almost wholly in a sense favourable to the priests. And so we behold

[1] *Geschichte*, ii. 297 f.

the remarkable state of affairs of a time when men had already begun to look upon the hierarchy with suspicion, and yet laboured might and main to establish still more securely the privileges and prerogatives of the priestly class.'

The combination of the older requirements (found, e. g., in Deuteronomy) with the later (those of the priestly code) vastly increased the obligations of the people.

Let us enumerate the religious obligations of the faithful Israelite at that time :

1. The sin-offering, thank-offering, and shew-bread. These were old obligations going back to primitive times.

2. *Bikkûrîm*—the first-fruits of grain, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey. These probably amounted at first to very little, and may be compared to the old-fashioned 'shower' of fruits and vegetables presented in the autumn to country pastors.

3. *Terûmah*, the best of the fruits of the field and of the trees. This amounted in theory to about 2 per cent. of the harvest.

4. The tithe. The Mishna decreed, 'Whatever serves for food or grows out of the earth, is to be tithed' (*Ma'aseroth*, 1. 1). The Pharisees in Jesus' day tithed 'mint, anise, and cummin', and every common herb, as we learn from the Gospels. In addition to this was the 'second tithe', described in rabbinic literature.[1]

[1] 'According to the Rabbis, the books of Numbers and Deu-

5. *Qallah*, or one twenty-fourth of the bread dough.

6. The first-born of animals.

7. Redemption money for the first-born child.

teronomy are complementary to each other; consequently there can be no contradiction between them. Thus there were three kinds of tithes: (1) that given to the Levites as stated in Num. xviii. 21 ff., and termed "the first tithe"; (2) the tithe which was to be taken to Jerusalem and there consumed by the landowner and his family, and which was termed "the second tithe", it being taken from what remained after the first tithe had been appropriated; and (3) that given to the poor. Therefore, two tithes were to be taken every year except in the seventh year: Nos. (1) and (2) in the first, second, fourth, and fifth years; Nos. (1) and (3) in the third and sixth years.'

'The Rabbis inferred from Deut. xiv. 22 that each tithe was to be taken of every year's produce separately, whether of crops, of cattle, or of anything else subject to tithing (*Sifre*, Dt. 105; *Ter.* 1. 5; *R.H. Sa.* 8 a, 12 b).' According to the Rabbis, the tithe must be 'eatable, the property of an individual, and the product of the soil'. Originally, the law applied only to Palestine, but was successively applied to Babylonia, Egypt, Ammon, Moab, and (?) Syria art. 'Tithe (in Rabbinical Literature)', in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, by Max Seligsohn. See also art. 'Tithes' in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, by G. F. Moore, especially § 4 and the literature referred to in § 5).

In our period the tithe was probably limited to fruits of the soil of *Palestine*. Artisans, fishermen, tradesmen, &c., paid no tithe; nor was any tithe paid by Jews living outside 'the land', i. e. in the Diaspora. The most natural result in the world of such unintentional discrimination was a decline of agriculture in Palestine, and emigration of a certain number of the most essential producing class—the farmers.

This was 5 shekels, between $2.50 and $3.25 in our money—but it meant two weeks' wages to the labourer in Palestine.

8. Parts of animals slaughtered for food (breast and right shoulder), and part of the wool at sheep-shearing.

9. Extraordinary dues, as for release from vows, redemption of *ḥērem*, &c.

10. The annual half-shekel tax paid into the Temple treasury ($0.25–0.32), which may be compared with the medieval Peter's pence. It had originally been one-third of a shekel, but was increased in the days of Nehemiah.

11. The annual wood-gathering for the Temple, by eight families of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin on nine days in summer—not a burden, but an honour.

12. Besides all this were the free-will offerings to the Temple, like those of the rich men who cast in their gifts and the poor widow her two mites, in the Gospels.[1]

Outside Jerusalem, as well as within the city, there were the offerings taken for the poor and the support of the local synagogues and schools, and certainly some sort of charitable support (if nothing more than hospitable entertainment) of the Rabbis and their disciples, to be counted among the Israelite's 'religious dues'.[2]

[1] Luke xxi. 1–2.

[2] It was the later theory that a synagogue could be supported

Thus the sum total of religious obligations levied upon the people by the various Old Testament codes was nothing short of enormous. 'What originally were alternatives are thrown together; what originally was left free and undetermined becomes precisely measured and prescribed.' [1]

wherever there were ten families, or heads of families, in the neighbourhood (presumably because each family was to contribute a tenth). Cf. Mishna, *Megilla*, iv. 4. 3. But this rule may date no earlier than from the time following the destruction of the Temple, when Temple tithes could be used in this way. Nevertheless, the question remains, *how* were the synagogues supported in the period before the fall of Jerusalem?

It is sometimes argued that many of the requirements listed above were abrogated in practice. But the abrogation dates from a later period, after the destruction of the Temple and the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem.

[1] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, p. 158. Cf. Smith, *Jerusalem*, i, pp. 360 ff.: 'The embodiment of all these codes and separate laws, dating from different stages of the development of the Israelite ritual, in one law-book, all parts of which were equally binding on the Jewish community from the fifth or fourth century onward, gave opportunity to the authorities of later Judaism, destitute as they were of the sense of historical discrimination, to augment and exaggerate the dues to Priesthood and Temple to an extraordinary pitch. The result, aggravated by the additions which successive interpretations of the law effected, was no small part of those burdens upon the national life in New Testament times, of which we hear complaints through the Gospels.'

It has sometimes been suggested that these obligations were mostly theoretical, and were not actually paid—as being too great in amount to be borne by the Jewish people. In particular the tithe has been viewed as an ideal requirement not necessarily

However, the mere enumeration of these obligations, one by one, is not enough to convince us that

realized in actual practice. But the tithe was one of the oldest and commonest of religious obligations in the East. Under the Hebrew monarchy, the king received a tenth of the increment of the fields, vineyards, oliveyards, and flocks (1 Sam. viii. 15, 17; contrast the third now paid to the Turkish Crown). This was equivalent to farming on shares, as in America and England to-day, but on the theory that the king owned the land. When the priestly code was drawn up, the king's tithe was to be paid to the Temple, on the theory that God, not the king (or 'prince', in Ezekiel), owned the land, under the theocracy. The tithe was common in the East. Xenophon's inscription set up beside the little shrine which he dedicated at his home to Artemis, copied after the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus, illustrates both the fact and its underlying theory (the land belonging to the goddess)—*Anabasis*, v. 3. 13, 'THIS GROUND IS SACRED TO ARTEMIS. HE THAT POSSESSES AND REAPS THE FRUIT OF IT IS TO OFFER EVERY YEAR THE TENTH OF ITS PRODUCT, AND TO KEEP THE TEMPLE IN REPAIR FROM THE RESIDUE. IF ANY ONE FAILS TO PERFORM THESE CONDITIONS, THE GODDESS WILL TAKE NOTICE OF HIS NEGLECT.' This tithe doubtless also supplied the annual feast given the worshippers, Xenophon's tenants (§ 9). The whole passage is full of the ancient religious spirit.

Josephus felt it necessary to explain the accumulations of wealth at the Temple which resulted from these manifold offerings, especially from the tithe—a strong proof that the obligations were real and were fulfilled. *Ant.* xiv. 7. 2, 'Let no one wonder that there was so much wealth in our temple [in the time of Crassus, who removed 8,000 talents of the precious metal], since all the Jews throughout the habitable earth, and those that worshipped God [proselytes, and θεοσεβόμενοι of the New Testament period], nay, even those of Asia and Europe, sent their contributions [not 'tithes'; p. 95 n.] to it, and this from very ancient times. . . . Now *we have no public money but only what appertains to God.*'

they were an overwhelming burden upon the Jewish people, though they greatly exceed the support given to organized religion by Christians at the present day. For the simple agricultural economy and the intense religious spirit of the Jewish people at that time made of this duty an opportunity for loving

It is to be noted that in the *Didache* (c. xiii), under similar agricultural conditions, the first-fruits which formerly went to the priesthood are to be paid to the Christian 'prophets'—the settled clergy of the Christian community. This proves, if nothing else does, that these were real obligations and not mere theory in Judaism.

One reason for the enormous increase in religious dues is of course the great increase in numbers of the priestly class. Where the office was hereditary by families, and not by first-born sons, there was no effectual control over the numbers who might deserve the support of the people. Aristeas stated that 700 priests took part in one service alone (before 200 B. C.). Pseudo-Hecataeus (quoted in Josephus, *Against Apion*; date about that of Aristeas) said, 'All the Jewish priests who are in receipt of the tithe of the produce [of the soil] and administer the public moneys [or affairs] are at the most 1,500.' Josephus maintained that there were four tribes of priests, each numbering over 5,000 (!), and that they were so many it was impossible for them all to officiate unless divided into the traditional twenty-four 'courses' (*Against Apion*, i. 22; ii. 7; see 1 Chron. xxiv. 7–18; Talmud Jer., *Taanith*, 4. 68; Luke i. 5—each with two weeks of service in the year?). 'The most probable figure appears to be the 1,500 of the Pseudo-Hecataeus; but if correct for the third century before Christ, we should need to increase it considerably for the Herodian period; and if we add the Levites, singers, gate-keepers, and servants, we must estimate the non-producing classes attached to the Temple at many thousands' (Smith, *Jerusalem*, i, p. 362).

service, and a privilege—or would have made, had not other circumstances conspired to destroy the Jew's ability to meet all his obligations, civil and religious.

It is when we consider that the legislation which required these offerings was that of the ideal priestly theocracy; and that this taxation was designed to be the *sole* tribute of the holy people consecrated to Yahweh; and that the civil taxes, both the Roman and before them the later Maccabaean and Herodian, were *over and above* all these requirements—we can begin to understand how oppressive the whole became. Naturally, the Roman Government ignored the priestly taxation, and went ahead just as if the tribute-money were the sole financial obligation of the Jewish nation. Naturally, also, the Jew paid his tithe and his first-fruits and his yearly half-shekel and the other required offerings to the Lord first, before he paid the Roman tax.[1] Hence the imperial tribute was doubly disliked: it was not only tribute exacted by a foreign power, maintaining its authority by brute force—a heathen, 'idol-worshipping' Empire, whose very existence was a blasphemous denial of the sovereignty of God; but it was tribute levied in addition to the true and rightful obligations of the people, viz. their obligations to their Divine King.

[1] It should be remembered that the question, 'Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?' was matched by another concerning the Temple tax; see Matt. xvii. 24–7.

Added to this, as a final straw, was the method by which the Roman Government collected the tribute (at least that large and everyday obvious part of it represented by tolls and customs), the farming out of the taxes to the *publicani*, either companies formed at the Roman capital, or individuals purchasing the concession from the provincial procurator. It was the proverbial crookedness and 'graft' of these tax-farmers, or their local agents, which brought the baneful system home to the Jews and made it most hateful in their eyes. These agents and their officers made their fortunes by exacting unfair taxes, which they also assessed, and then keeping for themselves as profits the difference between their receipts and the price which they paid the Government for the concession. It is no wonder that Theudas and Joseph and others led riots 'at the time of the taxing'.[1]

Oppressive taxation has been the fate of the East throughout history. It has, in some regions, almost completely crushed and annihilated enterprise and

[1] This sort of injustice has always been common in the East. During the recent war, there appeared a newspaper account of a revolt in one of the villages of southern Asia Minor. Seizing the golden opportunity afforded by the absence of the Turkish troops, local patriots threw off the yoke of the Government, cast the greedy officials into prison, and set up a new municipal government. Within three months, the taxes had grown more excessive than ever. The 'patriots' were driven out, and the old 'corrupt' officials reinstated.

initiative. The burden was steadily growing greater in first-century Palestine. The question of the tribute was a burning issue for the hearers of our Lord. The scribes, in asking him whether it was lawful or not to pay the tax to Caesar, were handing Him a live bomb. His dexterity in returning it proves Him just as keenly practical in mind as He was idealistic and spiritual: 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are His'—there is no use in trying to avoid payment, as there is in truth no need; God's requirements may be met at the same time; it is not a contradiction in terms to pay tribute to both! Even the little legend of the stater in the mouth of the fish caught by Peter may reflect something of the conditions of the time.[1]

Taxes were exorbitant. And although the masses of the people had not yet felt the full stress of economic maladjustment—since Palestine was mainly agricultural—still there were great and increasing numbers who had grown desperate and reckless. The existence and extent of this spirit is perfectly evident from Josephus; it is also apparent in the Gospels. It is true that the Romans interfered as

[1] Referred to above; Matt. xvii. 24–7. More likely, it reflects the questioning of the early Palestinian Christian community, whether or not they are under obligation to pay the Temple tax. If so, the present form of the story must be very early in date, before the fall of Jerusalem.

little as possible with Jewish customs (at least that was their provincial policy in theory), and gave Palestine as good a treatment as any other of the provinces. But it is also true that Rome failed to understand the Jew, his political and especially his religious aspirations, his conception of his duty towards God, and his ideals for the future of his nation. The Jew paid the tenth of the produce of his soil, and his other religious obligations, at the Temple in Jerusalem. His care for his hungering neighbour came next, for 'charity' was in addition to the tithe. And the theocratic tax of 10 per cent. was not remitted when the Romans came, demanding tribute for the support of their garrisons in Jerusalem, Jericho, Caesarea, and to gild the walls of Italian country houses, and purchase villas, and ornament the palace of the Caesars, and buy grain to fling to the hungry proletariat in the streets of Rome. Economically and politically speaking, the Romans should, no doubt, like other conquerors in the ancient world, have destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem when they first took over the country, and scattered the hierarchy; spiritually, of course, this might easily have been one of the worst disasters in human history. On the other hand, it may be said that the Jewish hierarchy should have recognized the enormous strain under which the people lived, and modified the requirements of the Law (much as Deuteronomy had done in the old days before the

Exile). But this is to ignore the conception of the Mosaic Law which was held not only by the hierarchy but also by the scribes and the masses of the people at large. 'Till heaven and earth pass,' one jot or one tittle of the Law shall not be relaxed, till all be fulfilled, was the feeling with which every loyal Jew regarded the sacred Torah. To suggest its modification, as something that should have been proposed as a practical measure of relief, is to follow an idle fancy. It belongs not to the 'history that might have been'; it is history that simply never could have been!

§ 8. *Summary*

The centuries following the restoration of the Jewish state in the time of Nehemiah and Ezra saw a gradual increase in Jewish territory and population. This took place both by natural expansion and by the influx of *rapatriés* from the Diaspora. Following the Maccabaean successes, the extent of proper Jewish territory was considerably increased. By the time of Herod, a century later, this territory was, so far as we are able to judge, fully populated. Then came the vast building projects of the Idumaean and his sons, at Jerusalem, Caesarea, Tiberias, Caesarea Philippi, Joppa, Gaza, Jericho, Phasaelis, Sebastê, and elsewhere. There was not only a revival of Solomonic architectural ambition but also something like a repetition of the economic results which had

led, ten centuries before, to the sundering of the Hebrew state. As the population increased, the already narrow margin between production and consumption of the food-supply steadily decreased. The tribute, first to Herod and his family, then to the Romans, became an unbearable burden, on top of the theocratic tax paid to the Jerusalem hierarchy.

A century later, and the crisis came, bringing economic depression, due to the two causes already named: (1) to increasing over-population, without sufficient relief; and (2) to over-taxation, civil and religious, which combined to crush initiative and destroy every incentive to accumulate property. If we may hazard an approximation, where no exact figures are available, *the total taxation of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus, civil and religious combined, must have approached the intolerable proportion of between 30 and 40 per cent.; it may have been higher still.*

The mood of the people, from the time of Pilate (A.D. 26–36) onwards, was increasingly rebellious. Each succeeding procurator had a harder task on his hands, without being able to cure the root-malady, the economic disease of the time—even supposing him able to discover it. Rebellion came at last. No one in Rome, no one in Palestine had the wisdom to recognize, or could discover the means to solve, the real problem which Palestine faced. The solution adopted was that same blundering, stupid,

criminal one which humanity has applied since long before history dawned, namely, Blood and Tears, Murder and Destruction, War.

Does this brief survey of economic conditions in first-century Palestine throw any light upon the career and teaching of our Lord, or upon the rise of Christianity? It undoubtedly does; for it lights up the whole phenomenon and problem of Jewish eschatology. There is an intimate connexion between crushing oppression, which leads to despair of the present, and the hopes of men for divine intervention, for the judgement to come (first of all, upon their oppressors), and a golden age in the future. This is proved by the form which eschatological speculation took in Judaism. It was no accident that apocalyptists dreamed of the world to come under the figure of a banquet, a Messianic feast, a time of rejoicing and plenty, of freedom and prosperity, with the hungry filled and the mournful and disheartened comforted. Or that they placed in the forefront of their vision, in times of acute political distress,[1] a divine intervention and chastisement of their enemies. Or that the more spiritual guides and interpreters of the common hope, men who realized that their 'hope was laid up in heaven',

[1] As we see in the apocalypses of Daniel, Assumption of Moses, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch.

and that the consummation lay in another world than this—that these men retained the crude symbolism of the political-economic dream which fired the hearts of the poor and oppressed, giving it a higher interpretation. The *forms* taken by this expectation were no accident; one of the surest of psychological laws, the very one that governs all dreams of the hungry and persecuted, of all persons with repressed desires—the prisoner's dream of deliverance, the fever-stricken man's vision of cooling waters, the famine sufferer's dream of bread—rendered inevitable their choice of imagery. And in our Lord's time the people were not only hungry for bread, and restless under the political restraints of the Roman occupation; they were yearning for the actual realization and establishment of the first premise of their priestly religion, the theocracy, the *regnum dei in terra*, the actual, tangible, visible manifestation of God's supreme power upon earth and the conformation of this world's affairs to His divine and perfect will. This premise was not yet actually realized. The Kingdom of God had not yet 'come'. And the longer it remained unrealized, the more vividly, it seems, were its coming and the consequences of its coming pictured. Though there were as many forms of the ideal as there were varieties of aspiration, or as the number of groups or individuals looking to the future for the realization of frustrated ambitions and disappointed hopes, still

they were one in their expectation that *the ideal could be realized only, since men were powerless, through the direct intervention of God.* The more desperate and hopeless the present became, the more bizarre and alluring grew their visions of future exaltation and happiness.[1]

Crushing, overwhelming economic conditions have for ages produced their results in the East. The shifty, procrastinating, unreliable Levantine or Syrian of to-day, with his cheerful fatalism and his

[1] See the series of articles on 'The Economic Significance of Messianism', referred to in the Preface. If the argument is proved by its converse, the conditions reflected in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (*c.* 109–107 B.C.) and the corresponding form of the Messianic hope which is there expressed are conclusive. '*The Testaments* appear uniformly to reflect an economically favourable time' (*Anglican Theological Review*, vi. 210); and, singularly, it is in this writing that we find an attitude of outspoken friendliness to Gentiles, a sinless priestly Messiah (a Levite, not a warrior-king from the tribe of Judah), and a kingdom that is gradually to develop instead of coming by cataclysmic, divine intervention. *The Testaments*, written in a time of short-lived prosperity towards the end of the reign of Hyrcanus I, is the only optimistic apocalypse in Jewish literature!

On the 'pessimism', relatively to present conditions, out of which the 'optimism' of apocalyptic sprung, see the articles in a symposium on Eschatology published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xli. 1–2, 1922, especially the article by Professor E. F. Scott. On the *ethos* of apocalyptic generally, see Fosdick, *Christianity and Progress*, 1922, p. 20, and a lecture by Gilbert Murray, 'Satanism and the World Order', reprinted in *Tradition and Progress*, 1922.

sad tale of trouble and disappointment, is the child of centuries of over-population, over-taxation, uncertain harvests, and recurrent war.[1] The Jewish race was the great exception. Neither nature nor man trod down the Jew without his protest, inspired by faith and hope. He fought a daring war with the Seleucids, and won, thanks partly to numerous conflicting engagements of the kingdom of Antioch in the middle of the second century before Christ—in which few, however, can fail to recognize ' the hand of God in history ', unless they reject the spiritual interpretation of history altogether. But with the coming of Pompey in 63 B.C. ; with the still more ominous rise of Antipater and the Herodian house ; with the gradual taking over of the administration of the country out of incompetent Idumaean hands into the strong and sometimes brutal hands of the world imperium ; with the most ominous of all and most terrible rise of the population itself to a point beyond the resources of the land to sustain ;—in the face of these facts, the battle was decided—against the Jew. Still he struggled ; and with the steady fading and final vanishment of hope for national freedom in this present world he deftly transferred his hopes to the world to come, the supernatural golden age at the end of the present evil time. His

[1] Cf. Gilbert Murray, *Rise of the Greek Epic*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1911, p. 43 n. Professor Murray refers more especially to the Greek dock-hand and petty trader.

faith in his supreme, transcendent God was unlimited, so completely unlimited, in fact, that nothing hindered him from committing even the gravest political indiscretions in the name of his religion. His conception of the possibility of miracle was wholly undefined. His trust both in the moral purpose of God and in the moral superiority of his own race and, therefore, the moral justice of his cause, in a word, his confidence in his nation's right to freedom, was boundless. *There is no mystery about the rise of eschatological expectations under these circumstances.* Nor is there any mystery about their variety, their paradoxical lack of system, their undogmatic, fanciful, visionary features. The eschatological hopes and speculations were simply the forms taken, in the two and a half centuries following the Maccabaean revolt, by an ancient, popular expectation of divine intervention and national salvation, under the control of a deep and genuine confidence in God which overleaped all obstacles and survived every disaster and disillusionment.

III

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPELS

The central subject of the preaching of Jesus Christ was the Kingdom of God ; it represents also the cause to which He dedicated His life and for which He laid it down in death. Whatever bearing upon economic conditions is to be found in our Lord's teaching may accordingly be sought in His sayings and discourses concerning the Kingdom.

As we have seen, the widespread popular hope of the coming Kingdom of God, while inspired by religious faith, was conditioned and sustained by untoward economic and political conditions. It had grown up and persisted through centuries of Hebrew and Jewish history ; and though in certain periods—as in the Greek period and in the time of John Hyrcanus—it had either waned or taken a more pacific form, it nevertheless survived, and in time of distress or persecution revived with ominous power and influence.[1] This capacity for revival was only

[1] ' As in practically all the literature of this type [*The Psalms of Solomon* and *Assumption of Moses*], the Messianic hope and prayer spring from desperate political conditions no longer to be borne ' (V. Simkhovitch, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, 1921, p. 34).

natural in a religion founded upon traditions, oral and written—especially when the written tradition, the sacred writings of the Old Testament, contained such literature as the Book of Daniel, the 'Messianic' Psalms, and the later prophets. The roots of Messianism, even in its apocalyptic form, are deeply embedded in the Jewish Bible.

One of the most important revivals of Messianism, important both as a symptom of social and religious conditions at the time and for its effect upon later history, is that represented by the appearance of John the Baptist in the twenties of the first century of our era. Harking back to heroic times by the manner of his dress and daily fare, and proclaiming with Elijah-like tones the message of the Lord, John the son of Zacharias was a 'sign' to his generation. His message was brief but searching: 'Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Fearless of kings, and scornful of hypocritic adherence to his movement on the part of members of the hierarchy or popular religious leaders, he seemed in truth 'one of the old prophets risen again'. His conception of the Messiah was apparently that commonly credited to

Simkhovitch's brilliant essay should be familiar to every student of this period and of the life of Christ. Unfortunately, the author is content with finding the cause of social unrest almost exclusively in political conditions. The political evils, which he sketches in vigorous lines and from a mass of accurate information, had themselves a deeper cause, as we maintain: viz. the incurable economic maladjustment and distress of the times.

the Pharisees, the divine, celestial Judge of the books of Daniel (as popularly understood) and Enoch :

He shall baptize you with the holy Spirit and with fire,
Whose fan is in his hand, throughly to cleanse his threshing-floor,
And to gather the wheat into his garner ;
But the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.
(Luke iii. 16–17.)

This seems, at first glance, far enough removed from an economic programme or a message of social revolution, a purely religious or ' spiritual ' gospel of repentance and personal righteousness. In place of a programme for the abolition of poverty, he counselled : ' He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath food, let him do likewise ' (Luke iii. 11). For political revolution he had not the least encouragement to offer ; instead of condemning root and branch the profession of the publicans, he urged them to ' extort no more than that which is appointed you '. Likewise he bade the soldiers ' do violence to no man, neither exact anything wrongfully ; and be content with your wages ! ' (Luke iii. 12–14). It can scarcely be said, therefore, that John is to be reckoned among the great ' social radicals ' of history. His replies to the questions of various groups and classes, ' Teacher, what must we do ? ' were uniformly in terms of individual righteousness, without regard to the underlying social or political problems which they implied.

Although it is often assumed that Herod Antipas cut short the prophet's career because of forebodings of political revolution, there is no hint of this in the Gospels. 'Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison' (Luke iii. 19–20). His reluctant order for John's execution is well known (Mark vi. 26)—indeed, the Gospel of Mark represents the whole proceeding, John's imprisonment and later execution, as the machination of an offended royal lady, with whose wishes her superstitious and irresponsible consort complied (Mark vi. 14–29). Nevertheless, the significance for us of the Baptizer's appearance is not exhausted by his actual message. The questions he was asked imply conditions of unrest and insecurity: poverty, oppression, militarism, discontent, incipient rebellion. As in the ministry of his great Successor, these questions were doubtless asked with *double entendre*. The soldiers would probably have welcomed some word of encouragement, 'Do not be satisfied with your wages! Revolt, be free, for the Messianic time is about to appear; the Day of the Lord is at hand!' Or, instead of a counsel to share apparel and food, 'Let him who lacks help himself out of the stores of his rich neighbours!' Moreover, the whole phenomenon of his revival of the Messianic expectation points, we are led to believe, in a similar

direction. There was physical distress and social unrest in the days of John the Baptist.

John, therefore, appears as the prophet of a great renunciation, one who had made asceticism his own private mode of life and who refused to sponsor a movement for social revolution in the name of God and righteousness. He was a popular authority whose influence, great in his own day, was destined to survive for a century or more. He might easily have become an activistic social revolutionary, but he refused. There was something he cherished higher than social action: personal repentance and moral faith.[1] Not even the claims of the nationalistic ideal, sacred to every Jew, outbalanced the divine demand for private righteousness. 'Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham!' (Luke iii. 8). In a world where, at best, the wills of men sometimes misrepresent, as their minds misconstrue, the will of God, such an attitude at least claims respect. It may even be preferred to that, say, of a determined Cromwellian militarism, which identifies all too completely the aims and ambitions of the hero with the all-wise, far-seeing purposes of God.

[1] If, indeed, the 'social problem' ever occurred to him: the intensity of his faith and the type of religious thought most germane to his mind precluded his consideration of purely 'social' problems.

To this movement of hope which John inspired and sponsored, Jesus of Nazareth attached Himself. Fresh from His baptism at the hands of John, the first announcement of his message, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent!' took it for granted. 'Kingdom of heaven' or 'Kingdom of God' meant of course but one thing for his hearers, however variously they conceived it in detail. It meant primarily no other-worldly and spiritual realm of the mystic or philosopher; it meant the common hope of Israel. How our Lord reinterpreted that hope; how He gave to it a new, vital motive and impulse; how it became, historically, the basis of the Christian hope of redemption; how He used it as the vehicle of His own self-revelation—all this belongs to the history of the rise of Christianity and the study of the life of Christ. With either of these subjects we are not here directly concerned, but rather with that feature of the background of Christ's life which explains the prevalence of the Messianic hope in His time, the variety of form which it took, and its significance for the interpretation of His teaching. Like John, though with far greater confidence, Jesus has been enrolled among the outstanding social prophets and idealists of all time. 'The Carpenter of Nazareth' has been hailed as 'the world's first socialist', and His name and figure the inspiration of a vast, far-reaching movement of social idealism among the submerged masses of the Roman world

in the early centuries of the Christian era.[1] Yet, if any fact in history is assured, Jesus was no class protagonist or social revolutionary. Far nearer the truth is the view that sees in His teaching, and exemplified in His life, a gospel of renunciation like that of the Baptist's—but profounder and more spiritual, if less obvious in outward demeanour or practice. The Kingdom, to whose coming He dedicated the whole of His energies and influence, was a greater object than the Israelitic empire of prophetic idealism or popular dream. It should come only when and as God willed; and it should be a heavenly Kingdom, supernatural and supranational, into which 'many shall come from the east

[1] Cf. *Die Entstehung des Christentums*, by Albert Kalthoff, Leipzig, 1904; *Der Ursprung des Christentums*, by Karl Kautsky, Stuttgart, 1908—and many later editions (now in the 13th, I believe); see also 'Primitive Christianity an Idealistic Social Movement', by Professor C. W. Votaw, in the *American Journal of Theology*, xxii. 54–71 (January 1918); and the essay on 'History', by Arnold Toynbee, in *The Legacy of Greece*, Oxford, 1921 (pp. 313–20). Kautsky assumes that 'concerning the person of Jesus, nothing definite can be said; and Christianity may be explained without reference to His person' (p. 5). 'Im besten Falle erhalten wir als historischen Kern der urchristlichen Berichte über Jesus nicht mehr, als was Tacitus berichtet: dass zur Zeit des Tiberius ein Prophet hingerichtet wurde, von dem die Sekte der Christen ihren Ursprung herleitete' (p. 19; cf. p. 342). This is not very promising, in 'a historical investigation', as Kautsky's sub-title names the work. I have made this quotation because Kautsky's is probably the most influential of current works upon early Christianity written from the purely 'social' point of view.

and the west, and from the north and the south': not just the righteous of Israel. The only effort men might undertake to 'bring' it was that of personal holiness and righteousness following repentance. The 'pure in heart', the 'poor (in spirit)', the 'mournful', the 'meek', were to inherit the Kingdom and behold the face of their Sovereign.[1] The Kingdom itself 'comes not with observation' or through human effort. Men do not 'build' or 'spread' or 'enlarge' the Kingdom of God, to use present-day homiletical language. It 'comes' by the will of God, accompanied by angelic hosts and inaugurated by the resurrection and the divine judgement. Only as individuals might men 'enter' the Kingdom, and only then as actual penitents in spirit, practising the divine Law as Jesus interpreted it, satisfying the divine requirement of pure inner motive, and obedient to the will of their Father in heaven as Jesus revealed it.

[1] Matt. v. 3–12; Luke vi. 20–22. The original form of the Beatitudes is a vexed question of exegesis and historical interpretation. Though the influence of Luke's 'social sympathy' is probable (it is to be seen elsewhere in his Gospel) and forbids accepting his version as the original, the influence of contemporary Jewish thought, of the Old Testament Psalter, and especially of the author's type of piety forbid the adoption of the Matthaean version as the original. It is probable that the Lukan version is more accurate, verbally; but it must be understood in a more Matthaean spirit. 'Poor', e.g., meant more than economically dependent; the word had a religious connotation, which Matthew's elucidation, 'poor in spirit', more accurately represents.

More than this, the whole attitude of Jesus's mind, and of the religious and social class which He represents, was averse to political action. 'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword' might have been addressed to the whole later Zealot movement, or to the anti-Roman 'robbers' and guerrilla patriots of His own time. If we may judge from the first two chapters of the Gospel of St. Luke, assuming that we have here, at the very least, an authentic example of first-century Jewish piety and a suggestion of the atmosphere of our Lord's boyhood, it would seem probable that those among whom He grew to manhood were not political enthusiasts, but pious, humble devotees of the ancestral religion. The Messianic hope, as they cherished it, was conceived in its more transcendent and less political form: pacific, priestly, traditional, and non-militaristic.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,
And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of his servant David, . . .
Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
To shew mercy towards our fathers,
And to remember his holy covenant;
The oath which he sware unto Abraham our father,
To grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies
Should serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
(Luke i. 68–75.)

This was the hope of 'the poor in the land', for whom their poverty had come to have a religious value since they hoped for salvation through none save God. It was a confidence nourished by the Psalms, especially the later, post-exilic collections, wherein (as in Psalm xxxvii), 'the poor' and 'the humble' (*aniim* and *anawim*) become almost interchangeable terms. And it is this very attitude towards 'the mighty on their thrones', the sturdy independence of the God-fearing peasant, that we hear in Jesus's words, 'they that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses!'

The absence in Jesus's teaching of any appeal to concrete action of a revolutionary sort is incomprehensible except from a religious point of view—and religious in the inherited, traditional sense of Hebrew piety. There are many lines of connexion between His teaching and that of the Pharisaic school, particularly the emphasis upon ethical righteousness and the application of the Law to a wider sphere of personal and social obligations than those directly contemplated in the Mosaic code.[1]

[1] See the recent volume by R. T. Herford, *The Pharisees*, 1924, supplementing his earlier volume on *Pharisaism*; I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, two series—the second, 1924; and Jos. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching*, Jerusalem, 1922 (in Hebrew), London and New York, 1925 (in English, tr. by Canon Herbert Danby). An extensive review by Herford appeared in the *Hibbert Journal* for July 1924 (xxii. 4, pp. 805–15). 'It is because the opposition of Pharisees and

Though many of the Pharisees had undertaken political action, it was usually without success—as in the days of Alexander Jannaeus and in the time of Herod; and up to the time of our Lord the party as a whole was traditionally opposed to revolution. It was among the Pharisees that the explicit belief in resurrection and future judgement found adherents and advocates: accordingly here was the most likely field for the growth of apocalyptic eschatology. It was the Pharisaic point of view which the *Psalms of Solomon* represented, as also the *Assumption of Moses* and many another apocalyptic writing of the time. One and all they counsel hope, patience, fortitude, trust, but not direct action or revolution. One and all they teach that in His good time God will seize the reins of His own power, sinfully usurped by tyrants, and set up His own kingship over the earth; but nowhere are men encouraged to help on that day by active interference, by valour of sword or refusal of allegiance. The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but moral and spiritual and no less mighty. The strength of the pious poor

Sadducees was to some extent that opposition of pious poor and hard-hearted rich which was of old standing in Israel that in criminal justice the Pharisees were noted for being the more lenient' (Bevan, *Jerusalem*, p. 126). Moreover, we are reminded of what Josephus says: 'The Sadducees are able to persuade none but the rich, and have not the populace obsequious to them; but the Pharisees have the multitude on their side' (*Ant.* xiii. 10. 6).

were their piety and poverty. Indeed, Israel as a whole was the suffering 'poor' of the Psalms; such poverty, viewed as the price of faithfulness to the divine Law, was the guarantee of divine recompense and salvation, when God came to right the wrongs of His saints and adjust the balance of men's deserts. Such poverty, that of the 'poor in spirit', is what we see in Jesus's beatitude (Matt. v. 3); its acceptance is a mark of real religious attainment and divine favour. Likewise, renunciation of the world's methods of direct action, and acceptance of persecution or oppression as the way of obedience for the true servants of God and members of His Kingdom, we also find in Jesus's teaching: 'Blessed are the meek, . . . the peacemakers, . . . the persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 5, 9–12).

Moreover, this view of poverty and piety is just what we find in one of the most important documents of early Palestinian Christianity, *The Epistle of James*. Instead of a specific situation, wherein the poor Christians, the readers of the 'epistle', are suffering persecution for their faith (or from a general economic condition), the thought of the author springs from a traditional magnification of poverty—as a virtue in itself—and a social theory which saw its ideal embodiment in the simple, patriarchal organization pictured in the Old Testament.[1] The increasing emphasis, in the period

[1] See the recent commentary upon the Epistle in the Meyer

following the Exile, upon submission to the divine will as the primary virtue of the righteous, had led to an attitude which made 'pious' and 'poor' almost synonymous descriptions of spiritual attainment. The virtuous man, according to the Wisdom literature and many of the Psalms, suffers hardship now; his impious neighbour prospers; but the day is coming when the tables will be turned, the wicked lose their prosperity, and the pious poor 'inherit the land'. Naturally enough, an ethical dualism of this sort fitted perfectly the scheme of things envisaged

series, by Dr. Martin Dibelius of Heidelberg, 1921, especially § 6 of the Introduction, 'Arm und Reich', which is a contribution of outstanding importance to our subject. See also Driver's art., 'Poor', in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*. Dibelius views the outburst against wealth in ch. v as expressed in an archaic and inherited manner of speech, perhaps common among a peasant group for whom piety and poverty were synonymous, and whose greatest danger was not inflammatory proletarianism but an obsequious deference to persons of affluence who visited their synagogues (cf. ii. 1–9). This traditional identification of poverty and piety, of wealth and idolatry or godlessness, with its obvious roots in the Old Testament, he calls the author's 'patriarchal-pietistic ethics of poverty—seine patriarchalisch-pietistische Armenethik, seine pauperistische Reichtumsfeindschaft, seine apokalyptische Erwartung baldiger Strafe für die (wie in der "Armenliteratur" ohne weiteres als gottlos geltenden) Reichen' (p. 44). If Dibelius is right, we could scarcely expect more conclusive proof of the economic significance of Jewish and early Christian Messianism. For here is a document in which that significance is not only naïvely assumed but its reflexive applications most clearly stated. Nor is this a novel view. The workers have believed it for generations: in fact, the idea is 'archaic'.

by Jewish eschatology: the servants of God *now* suffer affliction, poverty, oppression, and possess their souls in patience; *hereafter*, wealth, freedom, satisfaction shall be theirs.[1] Naturally, also, from such a point of view it was easy to criticize the 'worldliness' of the rich, and look upon wealth as inevitably debarring its possessors from the Kingdom of God.[2] One cannot call this anticipated judgement upon the rich and blessing upon the poor a 'proletarian' dream; for there is nothing proletarian about it. Not through the unyielding power of their hate or the strength of their united poverty is the overturning of society expected by the workers. 'Men are not supposed to change the world; instead, God's Kingdom is to come from heaven; the preaching of the Kingdom of God is not revolutionary, but apocalyptic.' Revolutionary action is nowhere contemplated. The only 'programme' for the oppressed is a further patient endurance of wrong, till the Day of Judgement arrives and the Reign of God is perfectly established.[3]

It may readily be seen that much the same is true of the background of the teaching of our Lord, as

[1] As Dibelius says, the Messianic pietists were the heirs to a traditional 'poverty-pathos' (Armenpathos) at the time of Jesus; *Brief des Jakobus*, p. 40. Cf. Enoch xciv. 8–9, where the rich = the wicked, the 'men of earth'; Isaiah liii. 9.

[2] Cf. James v. 1–3 and Luke xii. 22–33, xviii. 25; James iv. 13–15 and Luke xii. 16–21.

[3] Dibelius, *ib.*, p. 41; cf. James iv. 4–10, v. 7–11.

recorded in the synoptic gospels. It was a background—or, one may say, a set of premisses—inherited from the Psalmists and Wisdom teachers, the apocalyptists and the Pharisaic scribes and teachers during the great but little-known period of Jewish religious history between the Exile and his own day. It was the common attitude of 'the pious' of Israel (including those technically known by this title, but many others as well) in the golden age of Judaism, the days of the Second Temple. Moreover, this was Jesus's own religious inheritance; its presuppositions He took for granted in His own ministry and message. Renunciation, patience, sacrifice, love—these were the great key-words of His teaching.[1] And they were addressed to those who had already heard them sounded in the ancestral religion, but were tempted to violence, impatience, self-assertion, hatred, by the wrongs which they suffered.

That this really was Jesus's point of view is indisputable. Passage after passage, from different sections of the Gospels and from various strands of the evangelic tradition, unite in giving this harmonious impression. For example, the following:

(1) *The Temptation* (Mark i. 12–13; Matt. iv. 1–11; Luke iv. 1–13; from Mark and 'Q'). The narrative of the temptation implies our Lord's

[1] See, most recently, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, by Professor E. F. Scott, 1924, especially chh. v–xi.

consciousness of His Messianic vocation, and the action turns upon His choice of the way in which this vocation is to be fulfilled. One after another He rejects the ways proposed by political Messianism: the use of supernatural powers to provide earthly sustenance, the imperialist dream of world-empire, the sudden, histrionic appearance of the celestial Messiah in the Temple court. The way He chose was the lowly one of entire self-surrender, in dependence upon His Father in heaven, in patient obedience to the guidance of the Spirit, waiting for the hour when the Father chose to make Him known as Messiah. 'The two fundamental implications of the story, His consciousness of Himself as the Messiah, and His steady refusal to use His Messiahship for His own personal ends, or to satisfy the bizarre political dreams of His people—these two principles, not so much stated as implied, governed His whole ministry, and led him in the end to Calvary.'[1]

(2) *The Beatitudes* (Matt. v. 3–12; Luke vi. 20–6; from 'Q'). The poor, the hungry, the mourners, the rejected and ostracized, as we have seen, would be understood by our Lord's hearers not just in a social sense but in one that carried certain clear religious connotations. The significant fact, however, for our present consideration, is that no

[1] *Teacher's Manual* to *The Life and Times of Jesus*, 1922, p. 39; see also the chapter (vii) in *The Life and Times of Jesus*, New York, 1921. Cf. B. S. Easton, *Gospel acc. to St. Luke*, 1926, p. 49.

revolutionary 'programme' was offered them, no incitement to rebellion, or even to effort to 'better' their present state. As such, and just as they are now, they are pronounced happy—for theirs is the coming Kingdom.

It has sometimes been thought that the class whom our Lord had in mind were the 'publicans and sinners' among whom He spent a large part of His ministry. In the literal sense, this is scarcely possible: it is not *as* sinners or *as* publicans that they are promised future bliss. It is, rather, as lost but returning children of God, dissatisfied with their present position and longing for the privileges they have been denied, that they are pronounced 'blessed'. They have at least the beginnings of a religious mind and life. On the other hand, there is considerable reason for supposing that the 'sermon' in which these sayings are found was originally addressed to those who were already disciples and followers of Jesus: its subject is the character of the true citizens of the Kingdom, and the kind of observance or 'fulfilment' of the Law that is expected of them.[1]

Nor are those addressed necessarily members of the *Am-ha-ares*, the 'people of the land', of whom we hear frequently in Jewish literature, 'those who

[1] One need not go so far, however, as David Smith and others go, in calling this the 'ordination sermon' delivered at the sending out of the Twelve.

were ignorant of or neglected the duties and observances of their religion, upon the refinements of which, if not the rudiments, so much time was spent in the schools.'[1] For it was in this very 'sermon' (or at least in cognate material which the author of Matthew's Gospel has added here) that our Lord most explicitly stated the true and permanent claims of the ancient Law—in far more searching fashion than was customary with religious teachers at His time.

And if the persons addressed in the Beatitudes are not to be identified with any of the classes already named, surely we cannot seek such an identification among the 'Zealots', the extreme nationalists, the 'die-hards' of the opposition to Rome. In fact, though forerunners of the movement doubtless existed, the term 'Zealot' has no place in Jewish history prior to the outbreak of the revolution in A.D. 66; and, even so, the movement was in no sense Messianic. Nor is there—the severest possible condemnation of this identification—any encouragement of the Zealot programme to be found anywhere in the recorded teaching of Jesus or in the incidents of His public life.[2]

[1] Cf. Geo. F. Moore, Appendix E to Foakes-Jackson and Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i, 1920; Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar z. N. T.*, 1922, i. 190. The theory that the *am-haarez* were not pure-blooded Jews, and that our Lord was racially affiliated with them, is pure fantasy.

[2] Cf. Foakes-Jackson and Lake, *op. cit.*, i, p. 425. 'Simon the

(3) *The Parable of the Unfaithful Steward* (Luke xvi. 1–13; from Luke's special source, 'L' [?]). The point of this difficult parable is the right use of money and possessions—the *temporalia* of medieval devotional writers. The steward is commended, not for his justice but for his shrewdness: 'the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.' If even a wicked and unjust steward, cleverly manipulating his employer's credit to further his own private ends and stave off the nemesis of his incompetence, uses 'wisdom' in providing for the future, how much more should the 'children of light' make use of earthly *mammon* (goods, riches, emoluments) to further the highest of ends? In a word, the parable answers the age-long question, What is money for? Christ answers, It is to help, not hinder, the soul's salvation.[1] There is not the faintest suggestion of an economic or social programme in these words. Of course, the principle may be socially applied; and if so applied its fruits must be wholesome on the widest scale (not, certainly, through a literal imitation of the steward's conduct!). But the appeal of the parable is strictly

Cananaean', Mark iii. 18, they hold, should be 'Simon the zealous' (for the Law). The term may even be used, perhaps, in the Old Testament sense of 'trader'. It certainly did not mean 'Zealot' in the sense which that term acquired in the late sixties of the first century.

[1] Cf. Matt. vi. 19–34; Luke vi. 30–8. The Pharisees, Luke adds, were 'lovers of money; and they scoffed at him'.

to the individual. Money represents an 'opportunity for service', as we say to-day; but the parable is even more strictly individual in its point of view than this. Money is an opportunity for personal sanctification, through its proper use.[1] In strict accuracy, the practice of the medieval church was not wholly false to the letter of such teaching, however it misrepresented the spirit of the Lord, when it counselled men to forsake earthly possessions, hand them over to the church, and save their souls through a life of ascetical devotion.

(4) *The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard* (Matt. xix. 30–xx. 16; from Matthew's special source [oral tradition?]). Many interpretations have been given this unique parable in the course of exegetical history, some almost wholly from the point of view of economic or social theory. It has been made to support the principle of a flat return for all human toil, regardless of time or skill; it has been interpreted as a St. Simonian doctrine, 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need', based upon the ideal of complete social

[1] This might involve selling all one's possessions, dispensing to the poor, and entering Jesus's immediate discipleship, as in the call of the rich young man. See the interesting variant to this story in the Gospel according to the Hebrews (Origen, *Comm. in Mt.*, xv. 14; *Life and Times of Jesus*, ch. xi). For the teaching of stewardship—which is not the same as complete renunciation—see the Parable of the Talents (Minas), Luke xix. 11–27; Matt. xxv. 14–30.

solidarity : ' All for each, each for all.' In *Unto This Last*, Ruskin interpreted it to imply a fixed wage, determined by the requirements for food, shelter, recreation—i. e. a fixed ' living wage '. On the other hand, we have the famous interpretation of Professor Holtzmann : Jesus broke down the legalistic system of merit and reward by the simple method of applying it.[1] No man's utmost deserving entitles him to eternal bliss, or to a greater share than that of his neighbour. It is by grace we are saved : it is the gift of God—' I will *give* unto this last, even as unto thee '.

The subject of the parable is evidently the reversal of human judgements in the Kingdom of God : ' Many shall be last that are first ; and first that are last.' And the form of the parable is maintained throughout : ' The kingdom of heaven is *like unto* a man. . . .' The crux of the illustration comes in verse 10, where the labourers who have ' borne the burden and heat of the day ' expect a larger wage than that agreed upon. It is not the fact that the eleventh-hour toilers receive *as much* as was promised those who have worked through the long twelve-hour day : rather it is the fact that the twelve-hour men do not receive *more* than they were promised, that arouses their resentment and occasions their ' murmuring '. It is an altogether human sense of justice

[1] H. J. Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theologie*, 1897, i. 196; cf. A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden Jesu*, ii. 459 ff.

that prompts their complaint, a sense of justice that demands an even larger return than was stipulated in the morning. (There is no mention of a living wage, or threat of a lowered wage-scale.) It is a sense of justice often outraged in human society; but it is a purely relative and artificial thing. Who can evaluate absolutely the worth of labour? Or measure even approximately the relative value of the services, say, of the physician, the teacher, the scholar, the miner, the grazier, the engineer, the unskilled grape-gatherer in the vineyard? It seems to be our Lord's view that our estimates of relative value are mistaken; that our measure of monetary reward represents no true appraisal of a man's actual worth to society or his real 'earning power'. 'Many shall be last that are first; and first that are last.'

If there is any principle which makes impossible a simple, drastic economic 'programme', it is this recognition of the fluctuating value of human service; a man's 'worth to society' is wholly relative and not absolute. No socialistic or communistic system could survive such a recognition: indeed, in theory it is always ignored. Our Lord was not an economic teacher, though the ethical and religious principles which He laid down have a practical bearing upon economic conditions, and we cannot fail to recognize the validity of His view on related questions: ethics and economics are naturally and vitally interrelated. But in this parable the

whole emphasis is upon the religious principle of divine benevolence, not at all upon the varying scale of rewards, fair or unfair, that prevails in human society. In truth, our Lord's thorough Franciscan unconcern with 'the cares of this world', of which much has been made by Ruskin, Tolstoi, and other radicals—and even by Nietzsche—is quite apparent in this parable; and it is, after all, pretty well justified, on a historical view, by the whole of His teaching.

(5) *The Parable of Dives and Lazarus* (Luke xvi. 19–31; from Luke's special source, 'L'). Even more confidently has appeal been made to this parable as a proof of Jesus's proletarian sympathies: the rich man in this world is the poor man in the world to come, and the poor man becomes rich. 'Now here he (Lazarus) is comforted, and thou art in anguish.' But it is noteworthy that no hint of redress for social wrongs in this present world is suggested; the action is entirely 'other-worldly'. Though we may see in the parable an expression of the poverty-piety equation, familiar from earlier and contemporary Jewish literature, and from the Epistle of James, the outlook is thoroughly apocalyptic. Redress takes place in the life to come, when between the blest and the tormented 'a great gulf' is fixed, and the reversal of human fortunes becomes permanent and unalterable. There is not a single word to suggest a reversal in this present world;

not the faintest suggestion of a 'programme'. The 'lesson' of the parable is intended for the 'rich', and doubtless implies 'repentance' (verse 30), charity, individual and personal generosity to the ragged, hungry, sick poor (verse 21).

(6) *The Reply to the Pharisees and Herodians:* 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's' (Mark xii. 13–17; Matt. xxii. 15–22; Luke xx. 20–6; from Mark). This decisive and classical saying, which Dante and other Catholic expounders understood as setting forth the basic principle of the dual monarchy of Church and State, implied originally, as we have seen, the lawfulness and authority of the twofold tax, secular and sacred, at that time laid upon Jews in Palestine. It was a dangerous question His enemies had asked our Lord, 'Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?' A reply in the negative would enroll Him among the anti-Roman agitators, and assure His condemnation by Pilate; affirmation would imply—or might be interpreted as implying—treason to the ultra-nationalistic ideal identified with Messianism, and condemn our Lord as a leader who had lost His nerve. Jesus's reply caught His interpreters at their own game; the professional hair-splitters 'marvelled greatly at Him'. Yet His reply was more than a clever evasion. The principle which it asserts is consonant with the whole of Jesus's teaching as preserved in the synoptic gospels. While

recognizing the claim of real ownership to recognition through tribute, the innuendo—'to God the things that are God's'—leads our thought off to the far greater reality and overwhelming requirements of the divine sovereignty. In the light of that demand, the lawfulness of earthly tribute becomes a petty question of politics, best settled by acquiescence, since that frees the minds and energies of men for their true task as sons of God and members of His Kingdom. If Christ had been a social revolutionary He could not possibly have answered in these words or with the emphasis that they convey.

(7) *The Trial before Pilate* (*and Herod*) (Mark xv. 1–15; Matt. xxvii. 1–2, 11–26; Luke xxiii. 1–25; from Mark, plus special material given by Luke). Had our Lord been a revolutionary, or even suspected of being one—as John the Baptist has been suspected of revolutionary aims[1]—the story of His trial before Pilate (and Herod, who had put John to death) would have been far differently told. Making all allowance for whatever apologetic interests the evangelists may have had, assuming that they intended their Gentile readers to infer that Christianity was not a political creed, we cannot suppose that His answer to the question, 'Art thou the king of the Jews?' would have sufficiently allayed Pilate's suspicions, had he possessed any, to warrant

[1] See Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 5. 2; Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 78.

his effort to release Jesus. Herod's interest (the section is peculiar to Luke) was limited to curiosity over His reputed ability as a worker of miracles ; to him our Lord 'answered nothing'. Even the Johannine account, which represents our Lord's accusers as implying political disloyalty—'If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend' (John xix. 12)—is only an implication, not a direct charge : 'every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.' Though hardly a verbatim report of the trial, Jesus's reply to Pilate in the Johannine account must be looked upon as accurately interpreting His point of view : 'My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence' (John xviii. 36). A more complete disclaimer of political or revolutionary aspirations is altogether inconceivable.

(8) *Jesus's Conception of the Kingdom of God.* The 'Kingdom of God' was the ideal of an oppressed and disappointed people, refusing to admit the insubstantiality of their dream of national splendour or resign their exalted ancestral faith in God as peculiarly the Lord, the God of Israel. They were the chosen heirs of the divine promises made to their fathers, 'to Abraham and his seed, for ever'. Each successive national disaster, instead of destroying this faith, served only to intensify it and to persuade

men that the end was near at hand. Earthly conditions growing more insupportable, God could not long delay the coming of His Messiah, the Judgement, the resurrection, and the inauguration of the divine Reign. Such a faith, springing originally from untoward political and economic conditions, was nourished and sustained by the continuance and aggravation of the same conditions : for the coming of the Kingdom was to solve the insoluble problems of this world, and bring freedom, plenty, release from burdens, joy inalienable and eternal. In taking over the traditional conception, our Lord adopted an idea dear to the hearts of the people and one that possessed a well-recognized religious significance. Its roots, we have seen, are deeply twined in the profoundest spiritual conceptions of the Old Testament and the ancestral religion of His people. For our Lord, the Kingdom meant the coming Reign of God in which the righteous were to be set free from earthly limitations and impediments—external oppression, their own sins, their unsatisfied longings after righteousness and holiness and purity of heart. It was a Kingdom to be entered through repentance, humility, love. Its quality was the innocence of little children ; the poor, the outcast, the despised and forsaken might enter it far in advance of the professional models of piety—the religious leaders, the hierarchy, the scribes. It was a Kingdom of the spirit ; even John

the Baptist, the greatest among those born of women, might not attain in it the eminence of some simple-minded confidant of God, some humble, trusting, generous soul whose name had never been sounded by the lips of multitudes. Thus our Lord made use of the current belief, but gave it a significance it had not hitherto possessed.

This very fact that He did not take over the Messianic hope just as it stood, without revision or reinterpretation, proves that to the very end of its development, until its sublimation in Christianity and its crystallization in orthodox Jewish eschatology, Messianism was a hope deriving its vitality from the conflict of religious faith with intolerable economic and political conditions. Other religions and philosophies fell into dualism, or closed their eyes in self-deluding monism of one sort or another. Apocalyptic Judaism solved the problem by a dualism of Now and Then ; of Present and Future ; of a present evil world wherein God is not yet supreme (or wherein God's supremacy has been for a time defied and set at naught), and a glorious world to come wherein God, or His Messiah, shall be supreme. This much of the inheritance Christianity took over. It was the beginning of Christian theology when the disciples identified the Messiah of this scheme with Jesus of Nazareth, their Master. But the economic-political, mundane, nationalistic details which the apocalyptists had elaborated,

Christianity did not take over. How could it do so? Jesus Himself had ignored them. To the end, pre-Christian (and extra-Christian) Jewish Messianism remained a hope conditioned by, as it had originated in, the social-economic situation of a particular people, a particular class, at a particular period in the history of ancient Palestine.

Nevertheless, though our Lord 'spiritualized' the hope of the Kingdom, purged it of its nationalistic limitations, and made it a purely religious concept (what it had rarely been, before His time, and was not at all in its origin or, very probably, as popularly understood in His day); although He introduced those necessary modifications into the common hope of Israel and spiritualized it in this sense, He did not 'spiritualize it away'. He did not evaporate it, reduce it to nothing. It still meant—it became, indeed, more truly than ever before—a gospel of freedom, spiritual as well as economic, religious as well as social: first spiritual and then economic and social. It is a gospel of inner freedom which makes possible the endurance of outward subjugation in view of a glorious future soon to be realized: but it revolutionizes the oppression while enduring it, by the slower process of leavening the spirit and moulding the ideals of men—not by the overt or 'direct' action of social revolution. It became a gospel which guarantees in the end, when its spirit and teaching have come to dominate society, an

economic and social freedom that shall be its external counterpart and manifestation. Yet it is exhausted neither in a message of patient endurance of this world's injustices or in one of idealism and hope for a better social state to be realized in the future development or progress of human organization. It is 'an eternal gospel': its good news are for all men everywhere, 'high and low, rich and poor, one with another', who stand face to face with the ultimate facts of suffering, disappointment, death, the whole problem of our existence in a universe where man's best efforts are often frustrate, and where final uncertainty upon the most vital of all human issues seems—apart from this gospel—inescapable and absolute.

Our Lord appeared at a time when the Jewish nation was confronted with the severest crisis in its long history. Had He been a social revolutionary, no other time would have been more appropriate for the proclamation of a programme; but this He steadily refused to do. When we consider the limited and temporary effectiveness of programmes (either revolutionary or conservative), we cease to marvel at Jesus's 'lack of a practical plan' for immediate social advance. Instead of a programme of social reform or political revolution, He launched a revolutionary spiritual and ethical movement, whose full and final fruits must certainly include political, economic, social reformation, but which in

itself involves vastly more than this. His 'plan' went deeper, His work has been slower, its results have been more constructive and enduring for society itself than if He had been a practical social revolutionist with some fully articulated programme of action suited to His own generation. The solution which He found was the solution sought by the prophets, seers, apocalyptists in the generations before Him; but He found it where they only faintly surmised that it lay: a triumphant and universal, because primarily spiritual, Kingdom of God.

> There be many shapes of mystery,
> And many things God makes to be,
> Past hope or fear.
> And the end men looked for cometh not,
> And a path is there where no man thought.
> So hath it fallen here.[1]

[1] The final chorus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides, in the translation by Gilbert Murray.

APPENDICES

A.—*The Letter of Aristeas*, §§ 105–20

c. 200 B. C.

B.—*The Tariff Decree of Palmyra*

A. D. 137

APPENDIX A

THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS, §§ 105–20

SCHÜRER's date for this interesting epistle, *c.* 200 B. C., is probably to be preferred. Wendland dates the letter 96–93 B. C., Andrews between 130–70 B. C., and others later than both—Charles dates it *c.* A. D. 50 (H. Willrich dates it in the time of Augustus). But their arguments (summarized by Andrews in *APOT*, § 3) are based upon insufficient evidence.

The text is found in the Teubner series, Leipzig, 1900 (ed. by P. Wendland), and in the Appendix (by Thackeray) to Swete's *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1914. A German translation is given in Kautzsch, *Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des AT*, Tübingen, 1900 (Wendland); and an English translation by Andrews in Charles's *APOT*; there is another by Thackeray himself, who edited the text, London, 1904 and 1917.

§§ 83–91. A vivid description of the Temple in Jerusalem, its altar and cisterns for water.

92–95. The ministration of the 700 priests, offering the sacrifices upon the great altar in silence but in perfect order.

96–99. The vestments of the High Priest.

100–104. The view from the citadel, its towers and engines of defence, and the strict guard set over it.

105. The form of the city is well proportioned [*τῆς δὲ πόλεως ἐστι τὸ χύμα συμμέτρως ἔχον.* Read *σχῆμα*, with B]. Its circumference is about 40 stadia—to hazard an approximate figure. Its towers are arranged in the shape of a theatre, with thoroughfares (some above, some below) arranged in familiar fashion, and its cross-streets traversing these.

106. The ground of course lies sloping, since the city is built on a hill. There are steps leading to the main streets, up and down which there are always people going—who keep as far apart as possible, lest those bound by the rules of purity should touch anything unlawful. 107. Not without reason did the original founders of the city lay it out thus well proportioned, for they clearly recognized [its requirements].

The country is extensive and beautiful [πολλῆς . . . καὶ καλῆς]. Some parts are level, like that which belongs to Samaria, as it is called, and that which touches the Idumaean territory; some are mountainous [. . . MSS. defective]. Hence the inhabitants have to be diligent in agriculture and the tending of the soil to ensure good harvests. And by this means good crops are raised throughout the whole of the aforesaid country.

108. The towns of considerable size, enjoying a natural prosperity, tend to be well populated—to the neglect, however, of the rural districts, since all men incline to a life of enjoyment and it is only natural to pursue pleasure. 109. The same took place at Alexandria, which excels all other cities in greatness and prosperity. People came from the country and settled down there in such numbers that the land lacked for tillage. 110. Whereupon the king, in order to keep them from settling in the city, gave order that no one was to remain more than twenty days [at a time]. To the judges he gave written orders not to delay the cases of those who came from the country beyond five days. 111. Moreover, he appointed officers of the law to see that the dealers and their agents did not, for the sake of business, empty the city's granaries—I mean of the produce of the farms.

112. I have digressed thus far, since Eleazar pointed out these things to us very clearly. It takes an immense amount

of labour on the part of those who till the soil. For the land is covered with thick groves [*σύνδενδρός ἐστι*] of olive-trees and with crops of grain and vegetables [*σιτικοῖς καρποῖς . . . καὶ ὀσπρίοις*], and likewise with the vine and much honey. Other kinds of fruit-trees and dates cannot be counted with these. There are many cattle of various kinds, and there is plenty of rich pasturage. 113. Therefore it is rightly recognized that the country ought to have a large population, and the relations between the city and the villages are subject to regulation.

114. A great quantity of spices and precious stones and gold is brought into the country by the Arabs. For the land is well adapted to commerce, and the city has many arts [*πολύτεχνος ἡ πόλις*], and lacks none of those commodities which come from overseas. 115. For it also has convenient and well-equipped harbours, at Askalon, Joppa, and Gaza—and likewise at Ptolemais, which was founded by the king [Ptolemy I or Philadelphus II]. This lies about in the middle of the aforementioned towns, and is not far from any of them.

The country produces everything abundantly, since it has plenty of water and is well protected [by the mountains ?]. 116. The river called Jordan, which runs through it, never goes dry. The original area of the country was no less than sixty-million acres (before its neighbours encroached upon it), and had six-hundred-thousand men settled upon it, each holding a hundred acres. The river rises, like the Nile, in harvest-time, and waters a large part of the land ; 117. near the district of Ptolemais [?], it flows into another river and this in turn flows into the sea. [Is this the Kishon ? The author's topography is somewhat hard to follow.] Other winter-streams, as they are called, flow down and encompass the parts about Gaza and Azotus.

118. The country has natural defences, being hard to

attack and impenetrable by large forces—on account of its narrow approaches, with their steep precipices and deep gullies, and especially the rough mountainous region that surrounds the whole land.

119. It is said that at one time copper and iron were mined in the neighbouring mountains of Arabia. These ceased, however, during the Persian régime, the authorities at that time spreading a report that the working of the mines was unprofitable and expensive, 120. lest these metals should be the ruin of their country through a change in government—for their presence invited conquest.

APPENDIX B

THE TARIFF DECREE OF PALMYRA

A. D. 137

The decree, or what remains of it, was discovered in 1881; its text is bilingual, Greek and Palmyrene in parallel columns.

The text is given in G. A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1903), with translation of the Palmyrene version (the Greek is very defective), § 147, pp. 313–40; also in Lidzbarski, *Nord-semitische Epigraphik* (Weimar, 1898). Dr. Cooke has very kindly permitted me to reprint his translation.

i.

1 Decree of the Council, in the month Nisan, the 18th day
in the year 448, during the presidency of Bônnē, son
2 of Bônnē, son of Ḥairân, and the secretaryship of
Alexander, son of Alexander, son of Philopator,
secretary of the Council and People, and the archons
(being)
3 Mâliku, son of 'Olai, son of Moqîmu, and Zebîda, son of

Nesā. When the Council was by law assembled, it established
4 what is written below: Whereas in former times by the law of taxation many goods liable to
5 taxation were not specified, but taxes were levied on them by custom, according to what was written in the contract by
6 the tax-collector, and he was in the habit of making levies by law and custom, and on this account many times about these matters
7 disputes arose between the merchants and the tax-collectors—It seemed good to the Council of these archons and to the Ten
8 that they should make known what was not specified in the law, and (that) it should be written down in the new document of contract, and (that) there should be written down for each
9 article its tax which is by custom, and what they have established with the contractor, and they have written it down together with the former law on the stele
10 which is in front of the temple of Rabaseirē;—and that it be made the concern of the archons who shall be (in office) at any time, and of the Ten,
11 and of the syndics, that the contractor do not demand any further levy from any man.
12 A wagon-load of any kind of goods whatsoever, at four camel-loads
13 the tax shall be levied.

ii.

The law of the taxes of the custom house of Hadriana Tadmor, and the wells of water . . . . . Caesar
[The Greek parallel text gives the date.]

a.

1 From importers of slaves who are imported into Tadmor
[= Palmyra]
2 or its borders the tax-collector shall levy for each person
22 denarii.
3 From a slave who . . . . . for export, 12.
4 From a slave veteran who shall be sold . . . . . 10.
5 And if the buyer . . . . . he shall give for each person 12.
6 The said tax-collector shall levy from a camel-load of
dry goods,
7 for import, ... of the camel-load, 3 (?) denarii.
8 From a camel-load for export, 3 denarii.
9 From a donkey-load, for import and for export . . . . .
10 From purple fleeces, for each skin, for import, ...
11 and for export, 8 assarii.
12 From a camel-load [6 cwt.] of sweet oil which
13 is imported in the flask, 25 denarii.
14 And for what . . . . . this
15 for export . . . . . camel, for the load 13 denarii.
16 From a camel-load of sweet oil which is imported
17 in goat-skins, for import 13 denarii, and for export
7 denarii.
18 From a donkey-load of sweet oil which is imported
19 in the flask, for import 13 denarii, and for export
7 denarii.
20 From a donkey-load of sweet oil which
21 is imported in skins . . . . . for export 7 denarii.
22 From a load of oil which is in four goat-skins,
23 for import, the camel-load, 13 denarii,
24 and for export 13 denarii.
25 From a load of oil which is in two goat-skins,

26 for import, the camel-load, 7 denarii, and for export
7 denarii.
27 From a donkey-load of oil, for import 7 denarii, and for
export 7 denarii.
28 From a load of fat which is in four goat-skins, which
29 is a camel-load, for import 13 denarii, and for export
13 denarii.
30 From a load of fat which is in two goat-skins,
31 for the camel-load, for import 7 denarii, and for export
7 denarii.
32 From a donkey-load of fat, for import 7 denarii, and for
export 7 denarii.
33 From a load of salted fish, for the camel-load,
34 for import 10 denarii, and for an exporter of any of
them, ...
35 . . . . . for the camel-load . . . . .
36 . . . . . of the donkey-load, for import,
37 . . . . . the tax-collector shall levy 3 denarii.
38 . . . . . 10 denarii . . . . .
39 . . . . . from . . . . .
40 . . . . . 2 assarii.
41 . . . . . lambs, for import, ... one head, one assarius.
42 From a camel-load 2
43 . . . . . from ? . . . . . assarii 2
44 From . . . . .
45 . . . . . from one (?) who shall sell sweet oil
46 assarii . . . . . Also the tax-collector shall levy from
women, from
47 one who has taken a denarius or more, one denarius from
the woman.
48 And from one who has taken 8 assarii,
49 he shall levy 8 assarii.

ii b.

1 And from one who has taken 6 assarii
2 he shall levy 6 assarii.
3 Also he shall levy . . . . . and of the shop and general store
4 . . . . according to custom,
5 every month from the shop one denarius.
6 From every skin which shall be imported or sold, for the skin 2 assarii.
7 . . . . . clothiers (?) who shall barter in the city, their tax shall vary.
8 For the use of two wells of water which are in the city, 800 denarii.
9 The tax-collector shall levy for a load of wheat and wine and straw
10 and such-like, for each camel, for one journey, one denarius.
11 For the camel which is brought in empty he shall levy one denarius,
12 as Kilix, freedman of Caesar, levied.
13 . . . . . of Tadmor and the wells of water
14 . . . . . the town and its borders, as
15 . . . . . the taxes for which they (?) contracted before Marinus the governor.
16 . . . . . the camel-load, 4 denarii, and for export 4 denarii.
17 From . . . . . a fleece, for each skin, for import 4 denarii, and for export 4 denarii.
18 Also the tax-collector shall levy from goods of all kinds as it is written above.
19 . . . . . one assarius for the modius of costus-roots.
20 Sixteen . . . . . what shall be desired, he shall give to them for use.

21 . . . . . nine for every modius by this law, 4 sestertii.
22 Whoever shall have salt in Tadmor . . . . .
23 the Tadmorenes, he shall measure it . . . . . at one assarius.
24 . . . . . the governor.
25 . . . . . a reckoning . . . . . the Tadmorenes
26 . . . . . cus Maximus Caesar,
27 he is not liable . . . . .
28 Alkimus . . . . . the law, he shall pay the tax,
29 participating . . . . . he shall
30 pay the tax-collector. Whoever imports any persons into Tadmor
31 or its borders, and exports (any), for each person . . . . .
32 . . . . . export, he shall pay to the tax-collector 12 denarii.
33 . . . . . who . . . . . slave-veteran . . . . . 8 denarii.
34 . . . . . for each . . . . . this . . . . .
35 . . . . . import . . . . . and 10 denarii, and export 7.
36 . . . . . Whoever exports a slave-veteran
37 . . . . . a reckoning . . . . . written in the law
38 . . . . . pay 9 denarii
39 . . . . . is not written, because
40 anything . . . . .
41 is not like . . . . .
42 and import . . . . .
43 and of wool . . . . . which he exports, 3 denarii.
44 Tadmor . . . . . the tax . . . . . she shall pay. The wool
45 of (?) . . . . . the tax for export afterwards
46 as they have agreed . . . . . Italian modius
47 shall he pay . . . . . to the exporters.
48 Sweet oil which is in goat-skins shall the tax-collector
49 . . . . . because by mistakes in the

ii c.

1 document which the tax-collector committed . . . . .
2 in the (?) law, 15 denarii.
3 The tax on slaughtered animals by the denarius must
4 be reckoned, as also Germanicus Caesar [*c.* A. D. 17–19]
5 in the letter which he wrote to Statilius, explained that
6 it was indeed right that . . . . . the taxes should be levied
by the Italian assarius,
7 and what is under a denarius, the tax-collector must
according to
8 custom levy in small coin.
9 Dead bodies [of animals] which are thrown away are not
liable to taxation.
10 As to victuals, it is said in the law: For a load I have
ordained
11 that a denarius shall be levied,
12 whenever it shall be imported from without the borders,
or exported;
13 whoever exports to the villages or imports from the villages
14 is not liable to taxation, as also they agreed.
15 Pine-cones and such-like, it seemed good that
16 for all that comes into the market the tax shall be
17 as for dry goods, as has been also the rule in
18 other cities.
19 Camels, whether they be brought in laden or empty
20 from without the borders, each camel is liable
21 for a denarius, as is in the law, and as
22 the excellent Corbulo [*c.* A. D. 57–66] established in the
letter which he wrote to Barbarus
23 about the camel-skins (??) that they do not levy
24 a tax. Herbs . . . . . it seemed good that they should
25 pay the tax, because they are an article of merchandize.

26 The tax of female slaves, as I clearly (?) explained the law,
27 the said tax-collector shall levy the tax from female slaves who take a denarius
28 or more, from each woman a denarius, and if she take less
29 what she has taken he shall levy. From images of bronze, statues,
30 it seemed good that (the tax) be levied as from bronze, and the image shall pay
31 half . . . . . and the images . . . . . a load. For salt
32 . . . . . it seemed good to me that in the public place it be
33 sold, in the place where they assemble ; and whoever of the merchants
34 shall buy it at its reckoning, he shall give for a modius an Italian assarius,
35 as is in the law, and also the tax of (?) the salt which is
36 in Tadmor, as . . . . . by the assarius it shall be
37 admitted, and by the modius it shall be sold, according to custom.
38 . . . . . the tax on purple, because
39 . . . . . four and one-half . . . . . 40 . . . . . kings (?) . . . . . ?
41 . . . . . which shall be
42 . . . . . shall be levied,
43 the tax as the law . . . . .
44 two assarii . . . . . he shall levy, and for export
45 ? . . . . . as also they have agreed.
46 Sheep (?) . . . . from the borders . . . . .
47 . . . . . the tax is liable, or if below
48 . . . . . the city, to shear, a tax is not liable
49 . . . . . the shop and because, as they shall be (?)
50 . . . . . the tax . . . . . as in the law a denarius . . . . the tax shall not be levied except . . . . . shall be brought in . . . . . Tadmor, if he wish, the tax shall be.

Palmyra was a self-governing city-state within the empire. It levied its own tolls and tariff—presumably also its other taxes. The present decree was designed to settle the aggressions and injustices of the tax-collectors who had charge of the collection of tolls and custom duties, and whose ' rule of thumb ' often varied, sometimes no doubt to their own advantage. It is noteworthy that although the tariff is drawn up by the local senate without regard to the Roman authorities, it is really only an adjustment of an earlier one, which was ' in all essentials ' so drawn up (Cooke, p. 332). Note how the regulations established by earlier legates are quoted towards the end of the inscription with full assent and approval. The import duty (or octroi tax) is larger than the export, on some articles ; the tariff was perhaps meant to be ' protective ' as well as revenue-producing. The main source of revenue was merchandisable commodities : sweet-oil, fat, victuals (food-stuffs ?), camels, purple (dye ?), water, clothing, skins, fleeces, costus-roots, salt (?), carcasses for meat, pine-cones, herbs, ' dry-goods ', bronze statuary, and sheep (?). Of the other sources mentioned, in what remains of the inscription or is legible, slaves were of course included among ' merchandisable commodities ', as were also the ' women ' (for immoral purposes). It is easier to understand the New Testament grouping, ' publicans and harlots ', after reading this inscription : the former were set to collect a tax from the latter, and were no doubt thus thrown into frequent association with them. That the tax-collectors at Palmyra were ' publicans ' (*môksîn*) seems to be implied by the terms used ; cf. Schürer, i. 479.

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95